Equalities Policy 2019

Agreed/Review by Governors March 2019

Equality & Accessibility Provision

SECTION 1:   INTRODUCTION

Amendments introduced by the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001), Child & Families Act (2014) and the Equality Act (2010) have replaced all existing equality legislation. The Act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, ensuring that individuals are not unlawfully discriminated against.

For the purposes of this policy, it includes people with:
- Physical or mobility impairments
- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Learning difficulties
- Medical conditions including pregnancy
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Vulnerable children
- Looked After Children (CLA)

The School is committed to equal, independent access to all teachers, support staff and pupils. It seeks to achieve practical solutions to support all those on site, to ensure they have equal opportunities to benefit from, and contribute to, the learning process. When all of the school community participate, everyone benefits.

We will:
- respect the equal rights of all our pupils, staff and other members of the school community;
- educate them about equality.

As we review our school policies and practices we will consider their impact and implement all necessary resulting actions in relation to:
- ethnicity,

- religion or belief,

- socio-economic background,

- gender and gender identity,

- disability,

- sexual orientation and

- age.

We will promote community cohesion at school, local, national and global levels, comparing our school community to its local and national context and implementing all necessary actions in relation to:

- ethnicity,

- religion or belief, and

- socio-economic background.

The legal responsibilities placed on the institution require a strategic and "whole school" approach and its implementation aims to promote best practice in this area. Under the Equality Act, schools will also be allowed to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the needs of, pupils with particular characteristics. Positive actions will identify these measures and seek equality for all, regardless of race, gender or ability. An example of this is: a project set up to target disaffected boys on free school meals will no longer be acceptable as this is showing discrimination towards those who do not fall into this category. Policies based on current school practice are available in more detail.

AIMS:

The Equality & Accessibility policy aims to:

1. Show how the School has evaluated current policies and their implementation for teaching and learning, accessibility and care.

2. Contribute towards the development of an inclusive culture where every individual is nurtured and respected and where discrimination against people does not occur.

3. Establish good support systems for staff and pupils.

4. Develop a coherent and specific professional development programme for all staff.

5. To respect the rights and privacy of all.

SECTION 2:   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a)   The Role of the Governors

i.   To be legally responsible for the actions of the School as a whole (and is thus recognised by the Equality Act 2010) as the "responsible body".

ii.   To ensure that the actions of individuals, staff and pupils, do not discriminate against any individual without recourse of action or.

iii.   To ensure that all contracted to the School, as speakers, employees of agents on site, either permanently or temporarily, do not discriminate against a member of the school community or are discriminated against.

iv.   To ensure that all reasonably practical steps are taken to prevent staff or agents discriminating.

v.   To ensure that all parties are aware that it is a criminal offence to knowingly discriminate against a disabled pupil or member of staff or any other highlighted above.

vi.   To publish what discrimination means, highlighting the treatment of individuals 'less favourably' than others, and failing to make a 'reasonable adjustment', placing anyone at 'substantial disadvantage' is discrimination.

vii.   Co-operate with the Headteacher in:

    a. determining the School's equality policy and provision;

    b. promoting equal opportunities for all groups

    c. establishing the appropriate staffing and funding arrangements;

    d. Maintaining a general oversight of the school's work.

viii.   To appoint a governor (or committee) with special responsibility to take particular interest in and closely monitor the school's work on behalf of all pupils (with one dedicated to monitor SEND) and facilitate training for the governing body

ix.   To report to parents annually on the School's SEND and Equality policies.

x. To ensure that all aspects of teaching and learning, resources, physical environment, pupil and staff welfare, catering facilities and careers services comply with the Equality Act 2010 and all policies are reviewed, amended and monitored regularly in the light of provision and nature of needs.

xi. To ensure that procedures are in place to take reasonable steps to find out if a person is disabled/vulnerable and safeguards put in place to store sensitive information but this must not be an area for discussion prior to employment within the school, unless for safety reasons,

xii. To have direct responsibility for incorporating disability and equality regulations into Health and Safety procedures, ensuring that accessibility is steadily improved through any existing and intended building developments, and that staff and pupil welfare policies are updated and amended regularly, and ensure that disability issues are progressed consistently.

xiii. To be conversant with the Equality Act, The SEN Code of Practice (2014)and their responsibilities and how funding, equipment and resources are deployed.

xiv. To ensure that Senior Leadership take their responsibilities seriously and comply with the Act.

xv. To ensure an audit and risk assessment of the current situation is carried out and compared to the potential responsibilities under the Equality Act.

xvi. To put aside appropriate funds in the budget to make reasonable adjustments.

xvii. To deal with any discriminatory treatment quickly and fairly through an internal complaints procedure.

b)   The Role of the Headteacher

The Equality Act (2010) gives all parents the right to access to mainstream provision. The Headteacher, through the nominated member of the Senior Management team, should work with the LA to improve access for staff, pupils and parents.

i. To be responsible for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the School's work, including provision for pupils with SEND, EAL and vulnerable or disabled staff (as listed in the Introduction)

ii. To keep the governing body and all staff are informed of changes to legislation and provision.

iii. To ensure that staff with a disability, and those applying for employment, are treated with due regard according to the Access to Work policy.

iv. To ensure that all building work improves the quality of provision and access for the community with a range of disabilities.

v. Those applicants for new posts within the school will not answer health related questions unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of their role.

c) The Role of the Senior Leadership Team

Schools have a joint responsibility with the LA to prepare an accessibility strategy and accessibility plan to cover a three year period and should be monitored annually. There is a distinct difference between aids provided through the SEN framework and those provided through the planning duty. The SEND duties relate to an individual pupil but the planning duties relate to the population and future population of the School. The Access Working Group as overall responsibility for improving the accessibility of the building and grounds. Its duties include:

i. Preparing an equality plan in liaison with the LA.

ii. Ensuring that the Access to Work Policy for staff is implemented fully.

iii. Liaising with feeder schools and outside agencies to identify all pupils, and prospective pupils who face barriers to their learning and full participation.

iv. Planning to increase access to the curriculum by undertaking regular curriculum audits and monitoring the progress of disabled and other identified pupils for patterns of achievement and participation.

v. Taking responsibility for planning to improve the physical environment of the School. The physical environment covers all areas of the building and grounds.

vi. Ensuring that building development or changes to improve physical access comply with building regulations – very important with new buildings.

vii. Considering accessibility in all purchasing decisions.

viii. Informing the Governing Body of any required improvements to the accessibility of the physical environment of the School.

ix. Having responsibility for relevant policies and procedures that are consistent with current legislation and avoid discrimination.

x. Having responsibility and oversight of the production of materials and resources in alternative formats, e.g. large print, Braille, etc.

xi. Preparing and implementing staff training programmes and documentation on disability awareness i.e. ASD training, including new Staff Induction.

xii. Taking reasonable steps, liaising with the LA, parents and the school SENCO, to find out about a pupil's needs.

xiii. Putting in place procedures that ensure staff and pupil confidentiality - publish a confidentiality policy for the School.

xiv. Discussing timetable and rooming allocation with the appropriate SLT member to ensure staff and pupils with disabilities have the provision designated in the access plan and have access to appropriate resources.

xv. Develop and monitor Positive Action Provisions.

d) The Role of the Head of Department/Pastoral Head

i. Work with the school SENCO responsible for disability and equality awareness and provision to increase the extent to which all pupils can participate in the School Curriculum and gain access to learning opportunities.

ii. Undertake curriculum audits that review patterns of achievement and participation in the subject area.

iii. Review programme specifications to ensure they do not create barriers to access by disabled or vulnerable staff and pupils.

iv. Plan to increase access to the subject for disabled and vulnerable pupils by varying approaches to delivery, through classroom management strategies, group and peer support and resource banks.

v. Ensure departmental staff maximise participation of all in the department and monitor and evaluate practice.

vi. Carry out departmental audits e.g. Health and Safety and Accessibility to support improving the physical environment of the department.

vii. Attend appropriate staff training and work with outside agencies on the educational implications of different disabilities and vulnerabilities on the management of particular health needs in the classroom, and share good practice.

viii. Become familiar with physical aids to access education including ICT equipment.

ix. Consider accessibility in all purchasing decisions.

x. Ensure appropriate resources are prepared for disabled staff and pupils in alternative formats taking account of disabilities and parents preferred means of communication.

xi. Provide information within a reasonable time, i.e. at the start of each academic year for timetables and the beginning of lessons for pupil worksheets.

xii. Monitor and evaluate provision regularly with support staff for both school employees and pupils to further improve efficiency and effectiveness.

xiii. Address concerns raised by pupils, staff and parents and raise issues with senior management when they cannot be alleviated.

xiv. Ensure equality of opportunity throughout the department includes all that work or learn within it and the department is free from discriminatory practices.

e) The Role of Members of Staff

i. Attend training appropriate to students for knowledge of what is expected of them as teachers/support staff and be resourced to respond.

ii. Keep up-to-date with school policies relating to disability, equality and additional needs.

iii. Plan teaching activities to ensure they are accessible to support staff and pupils, making adjustments in response to the particular needs of the child.

iv. Ensure physical access, lighting and acoustics when delivering a lesson that includes a person with a disability. (Physical access to include assisting those who lip read).

v. Ensure practical sessions are accessible to allow free movement, benches and work surfaces at appropriate heights and assistance for pupils to enable them to carry out tasks safely.

vi.   Address health and safety issues and procedures with pupils and support staff and review where appropriate. (As highlighted in Health Care Plans where appropriate)

vii.   Carry out 'risk assessment' and induction for particular pupils and staff.

viii.   Provide resources at the beginning of a lesson and pace delivery to enable support assistants/interpreters to keep up.

ix.   Provide learning resources that are accessible by design, especially within virtual learning environments.

x.   Make appropriate adjustments to assignments and assessments to enable a disabled pupil to demonstrate their learning. This may mean altering the mode of assessment, provision of study skills support, flexible deadlines and checks for unnecessary barriers to examinations.

xi.   Review provision regularly with the pupil and support person.

xii.   Ensure all pupils participate regardless of disability or need.

xiii.   Promote equality and cohesion in their work.

SECTION 3:   ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

1.   Buildings and Premises

a) The Act covers all aspects of the physical environment of the School. Access to buildings is available through level, dropped kerb or ramped entry and emergency evacuation arrangements include alternative escape routes for people with mobility, hearing and visual impairments.

b) Pathways through and around the building have effective lighting and signage and tone contrast to mark the edge of footpaths, corridors and steps. Doors are similarly marked to assist orientation. Flooring is easy for wheelchair users.

c) Classrooms, workshops and laboratories have desks at varying heights and special adjustable seating is provided.

d) Disabled pupils and staff have access to all facilities offered to able-bodied pupils and staff, e.g. dining facilities, staff room, lockers (at an appropriate height) and cloakroom facilities.

e) There is a designated disabled toilet area in each section of the School (by Reception, L10 and PE, there are also two upstairs). Combined disabled toilet and shower arrangements are provided in the sports changing rooms.

f) Several car parking spaces are conveniently located at the front and side of the school and marked as reserved for disabled drivers. The car parking area is well lit for evening events.

g) All new building projects are reviewed in order to ensure that the opportunity is taken to build in accessibility from an educational perspective.

h) Timetabling and rooming needs are very carefully planned and staff are trained to make adaptations and respond to individual needs, for example, a number of staff are trained in the use of the evacuation chairs and this is used in providing support when disabled students are upstairs.

i) Premises staff strive to keep routes around school, doorways and toilets open and accessible and replace any malfunctioning equipment promptly.

j) Services, equipment and procedures are reviewed regularly to take account of changes to technology and good practice.

2.   Admissions and Marketing

a) The school prospectus and job application details are available in alternative formats, e.g. on disc and in a reasonable size font. Access arrangements are included in the prospectus and school information sent to staff applying for posts, with a named member of staff provided for applicants to contact if they need further information. The published information makes it clear that additional arrangements can be made for individual cases. The school website complies with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines. Staff, in meeting visitors to the School, have received disability and equality training and all staff participating in school recruitment events are aware of procedures and facilities available to disabled applicants.

b) Admissions to the School are on academic grounds alone, except in exceptional circumstances. The admissions policy states how applications are processed and opportunity is given to pupils to visit the building to see what, if any, additional alterations will be necessary. Disabled and vulnerable pupils have an additional

individual induction visits that will include a full tour of the School, the facilities available in each area, and a meeting with key personnel who may be assisting them in different departments.

c) All disabled pupils and staff have access to regular reviews, either through a SEND statement, Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or Health Care Plan (HCP) or an access to work assessment. Admissions procedures are altered if necessary, to adjust to outcomes from such reviews.

3.   **Teaching and Learning**

a) All pupils and staff have full access to teaching and learning opportunities. To prevent academic standards being compromised, teachers will define precisely what the core element of the teaching programme is and assess what alterations may need to be made to enable all pupils to participate fully. This may mean that some alterations need to be made for individuals. For disabled teaching staff, particular classroom aids and resources may assist with lesson delivery and a Teaching Assistant may help with the delivery of part of the lesson particularly where specialist equipment is required.

b) Teachers need to know what disabilities, learning or language difficulties have to be taken into account when delivering a lesson, e.g. the direction of delivery of the lesson (to enable lip readers to follow); advance preparation of resources, handed out at the beginning of the lesson or available on-line prior to the lesson (for pupils with visual impairment and dyslexia); creating breaks in the speech parts of a lesson (to enable sign language interpreters to keep up); direct questions and comments at the pupil or adult (rather than TA); provide teacher, peer, or assistant support in making presentations (for pupils with physical and/or communication difficulties; allowing only one person at a time to talk in discussion (to prevent background noise masking the discussion/delivery of a lesson (to assist those with a hearing impairment); and to ensure that, regardless of any communication problem, all pupils have the opportunity to participate in the lesson.

c) For group activities in class, some changes have been necessary to procedures to enable the individual(s) in the group(s) to participate fully in the outcome of the

group work. Sometimes support is needed to carry out the task and to ensure that all pupils contribute. Adjustments are sometimes needed if the group work is to be assessed.

d) Access to ICT equipment, materials and the use of ICT resources is essential for many disabled adults and pupils.

e) For practical sessions, we have installed some adjustable worktops and benches with access for wheelchairs. TA's may help pupils and staff to use equipment. All users of practical areas are well trained of Health and Safety procedures and responsibilities. Departmental risk assessments are always undertaken for all practical activities.

f) Work placements are always audited for accessibility. Teachers involved in placing pupils are made aware of the outcome. N.B.: Most workplace environments will have made reasonable adjustments to facilitate disabled access.

g) All pupils are encouraged to participate in out-of-school activities such as visits and field trips. Rules and regulations governing visits are rigorous and it is necessary to carry out a risk assessment with a particular disability in mind prior to the visit being organised. Access for disabled pupils, staff and helpers should be ascertained at an early stage before proceeding with the arrangements. First Aid trained support staff will usually also attend the visit to ensure the maximum educational benefit.

4. **Staff Development**

a) The School takes specific steps to raise awareness of disability, equality, EAL or learning needs among staff and pupils. Staff disability & equality training programmes are implemented on a regular basis to ensure the governing body is seen to take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination occurring, and that staff and pupils are more confident to challenge negative and inappropriate behaviour in colleagues and pupils and to promote inclusion.

b) A training programme is available for all staff, teaching and non-teaching colleagues with priority given for those responsible for, or working alongside disabled staff and/or pupils. Training includes informing staff on how they can

make anticipatory and appropriate adjustments in their departments and we hope to actively involve disabled persons.

c) Disability, Equality, Child Protection and SEND needs are included in Induction training for all staff and in conjunction with the SEND training programme. All training is assessed annually with the views of disabled staff and pupils being sought to enable change and modification for inclusion in updating policies for governor review.

d) Departments with disabled colleagues will have training on disability issues and staff have been asked to suggest what training they require to facilitate support for their disabled colleagues.

e) All staff are trained in producing resources in other ways, or know how to access these. Good practice guides are produced to cover staff and pupil disabilities and shared by departments.

f) Departments are involved in auditing their rooms and resources particularly when new pupils/staff present a disability previously not catered for in the School.

g) Staff/pupil confidentiality is an issue that all staff need training in. This training includes: how to manage disclosure of a disability, the School's confidentiality policy and who should or should not, have access to the information.

h) Different staff groups need training in aspects of good practice. SLT have a thorough understanding of their legal responsibilities and the school SENCO has responsibility for offering advice and information. All staff need to be aware of their responsibilities towards disabled and/or vulnerable people and specific training sessions will be necessary for supporting individual, identified disabilities.

5. Assessment and Examinations

a) To ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement, assessment practices may be modified with an aim to change the delivery or mode of assessment rather than the way it is marked. Reasonable adjustments

to the method of assessment take priority over differential marking. However, staff are well aware that the adjustments should not compromise academic standards.

b) Adjustments to assessment are made on an individual basis and pupils may have alternative coursework set, additional time, use of ICT or amanuensis, readers, large print or Braille, or adjustment to examination timetables. Any presentations required for examination may need additional time for pupils with communication difficulties, or the presentation may be given in a different format. Support staff working with examination candidates have appropriate training and higher level skills, so that they do not disadvantage the pupil.

c) For practical work and performances, pupils may need extra support or time to demonstrate their abilities.

d) Computer assisted assessment can help disabled pupils but it can also create new barriers to achievement.

e) Coursework methods and outcomes are discussed with individual pupils, parents and any support staff. It may be appropriate to have flexible deadlines, alternative formats, and support for research or reduced reading lists. External assessors are notified of any adjustments that have been made via qualified personnel (SENCO and Asst SENCO).

f) The School has a clear policy about adjustments to examinations for disabled pupils. Staff, pupils and parents are all made aware of the policy well in advance of any public examination and the policy also applies to class examinations and assessments.

6. The Library

a) All pupils and staff have equal opportunity to use the facilities in this centre and at the appropriate level of need.

b) Pupils and staff have access to these buildings and toilet facilities are accessible close by. All resources buildings, in line with school policy, have good lighting and colour contrasts to assist orientation, accessible help desks, and appropriate fire and emergency procedures.

c) Disabled pupils and staff have a clear priority in the use of the IT equipment with assistive technology, e.g. scanners

d) The Librarian makes adjustments according to individual need. This includes: individual induction, priority access; fetching resources that are out of reach; general assistance; extended loan periods and setting aside resources in advance for those who find difficulty accessing information.

e) The Librarian participates in equality training and understands the procedures on confidentiality.

f) She reviews the services annually and takes into account any changes in good practice.

7. **Career Services**

a) The designated Careers room is accessible to pupils, staff and parents who may have a disability (lift near the Dining Hall).

b) Some pupils with a disability require additional support in careers sessions and interviews. The school SENCO and Asst. SENCO liaises with our Work Related Co-ordinator (WRC) and the TA's to ensure support is available and appropriate.

c) The school SENCO and Asst. SENCO will alert WRC to advise a pupil with a specific disability especially if a pupil does not have a statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health Care Plan. Part of the discussion involves the giving of advice about support available to employers through Access to Work and individual rights under the EA. Individual, longer appointments may be necessary for some disabled pupils.

d) Statutory work placements for disabled or vulnerable pupils need careful selection and greater liaison between the school SENCO, Asst. SENCO, WRC and employer. Some employers may need to be made aware of their responsibilities under the EA and others may need to be encouraged to consider taking a disabled pupil.

e) Making reasonable adjustment for pupils requires that they are given the necessary support. Some of the reasonable adjustment may come in the School careers programme, allowing a TA to accompany the student on work experience, as part of any work related or vocational training offered as part of

the curriculum. Individual help provided to use careers resources, assistance with researching careers, writing CVs and applications is given by an appropriately informed member of staff.

f) Regular review of provision includes the views of disabled pupils, parents and employers in work placement situations.

8. Residential Services

a) Prospectus information is available in different formats and makes it clear what adjustments we have put in place already.

b) Rooms for disabled persons, staff and pupils, are integral to the main accommodation and have standard alterations expected for disabled persons. Reasonable adjustments will be made for individual staff and/or pupils. A staff training programme is in place for all T.A's on site.

c) For any residential fieldwork/courses/holiday activities, the Group Leader will advise the centre of the needs of their party, and will only select a centre that is accessible to all. Most activities, with careful planning by teachers, support staff and centre staff, are made accessible to most disabled and/or vulnerable pupils.

9. Confidentiality

a) All pupils and staff are encouraged to disclose a disability and in doing so, have a right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act, and separately under the Equality Act. If a pupil or a member of staff discloses a disability, members of staff will, with the pupil's or member of staff's consent, pass this information to the designated member of staff.

b) The staff handbook has information on how to manage disclosure of a disability and a copy of the School's confidentiality policy – this details that should, or should not, have access to the information.

c) Confidential information about a disabled pupil or member of staff is recorded and kept securely. Care is taken in deciding what information is kept confidential to particular staff and what information is divulged to all.

10. Publication & Review

This Equality and Accessibility Policy fulfils the statutory requirements under the terms of legislation referred to above. As it is a public document, once ratified by Governors, it will be available on request. This document will be reviewed in 2020.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

In the foreseeable future, as policy documentation or procedures are being reviewed, we will consider potential impact in terms of:

- ethnicity,
- religion or belief,
- socio-economic background,
- gender and gender identity,
- disability,
- sexual orientation and
- age.

Where a potential issue is identified, it will be included within the SDP or the Equality Action Plan.

12. Equality Objective Setting Process

Our equality objective-setting processes involve gathering evidence, as follows:

i.   from the equality impact assessments listed above,

ii. from the following data

- Data on ethnicity, religion or belief and socio-economic background collected and compared with local and national data
- Attainment and progress data for all groups of pupils
- Attendance Data for all groups of pupil
- Data on representation of different groups in ability sets
- Data on participation of different groups in extra-curricular activities
- Survey data from children and parents

iii. and from involving relevant people (including disabled people) from the start in the following way:

- Discussion with groups of pupils
- Discussion with parents

- Discussion with governors

- Discussion with community users

- Evidence gathered from disability survey in admission pack

The evidence will then be analysed in order to choose objectives that will:

i. promote equality of opportunity for members of identified groups

ii. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and

iii. foster good relations between different groups