



Disability Equality Scheme

Reading School

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Amendment Act (2005) introduced a new positive duty on the public sector to promote disability equality. This legal duty means that, alongside their existing duties, schools 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 the governing body of Reading School.

The General Duty

Reading School 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. Reading School will need to identify pupils, parents and staff likely to be considered disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Specific Duty

Reading School requires 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.

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.

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)

There are key areas to include in Reading School’s Disability Equality Scheme.

A statement about the school’s vision/ethos/values in general

A brief explanation of the Disability Discrimination Act/ Disability Equality Duty so that it is clear what statutory need is being met.

A definition of disability - not always straightforward. Some people only see disability as a ‘physical handicap’ and do not consider the needs of others who are also disabled.

The role of individuals and groups within a setting i.e. Governors, Principal, all staff etc

How Reading School has consulted with disabled parents, staff, young people and others in the community regarding disability. This is often called ‘Information Gathering’ and is a vital part of the Disability Equality Scheme.

Disabled people should be involved in all key aspects of the development of the Scheme, such as:

Identifying the barriers faced by disabled people and unsatisfactory outcomes, setting priorities for action plans AND assisting planning activity.

The regulations specifically require the involvement of disabled people in the development of the Scheme. However, the involvement of disabled people in the implementation of the various aspects of the Scheme (such as conducting impact assessments and gathering evidence) will also be critical to the successful implementation of the duty. For example, involving disabled people in monitoring the success of initiatives throughout the duration of the Disability Equality Scheme will assist with evaluation.

The recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees

An action plan of specific points to address the needs of the school.

Reading School's Vision, Ethos and Values

At Reading 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. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible.

At Reading School we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit. We will seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination against children and staff by adhering to our duties as an employer under the legislation.

Reading School aims to provide a secure, happy and stimulating learning environment where everyone is valued and encouraged to do his or her best at all times. There are no exceptions to this. We are proud of the diversity of our school community and are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all, including pupils, parents and staff who are disabled.

Reading School has high ambitions for its disabled pupils and expects them to participate in all aspects of school life.

Explanation of Disability Discrimination Act/Disability Equality Scheme showing what statutory need is to be met by Reading School

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 Duty of Reading School

The governing body of Reading School has a duty to:

- promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: pupils, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to
- produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme to show how they will meet these duties.

The governing body of Reading School is required to plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils in three ways, by:

- 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.

Definitions

1. A definition of disability

The disability discrimination duties and the planning duties are owed to all pupils who are defined as being disabled in legislation.

Definitions in the Children Act 1989 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

A child is disabled if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from a mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed.

Section 17 (11), Children Act 1989

A person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Section 1 (1), Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Definition of the terms:

- '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'; and
- 'long-term' is defined as 12 months or more.

Mental and physical impairments

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term, as defined above. Some progressive conditions, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS are included before they have an effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Normal day-to-day activities

The test of whether an impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one 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;
- perception of risk of physical danger.

Special educational needs and disability

Though the definition of disability comes from the DDA and the definition of special educational needs comes from the Education Act 1996, there is a significant overlap between the two groups of children. The definition of SEN includes many, but not necessarily all, disabled children: a disabled child has special educational needs if they have a disability and need special educational provision to be made for them in order to be able to access the education which is available locally.

The role of Principal and Governing Body within Reading School

The governors are responsible for:

- making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation and for
- ensuring that the school Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed.
- reviewing the following policies; Equal Opportunities & Inclusion, Gender, Racial equality & Cultural Diversity and Recruitment & Retention

The Principal is responsible for:

- making sure the school Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed;
- making sure the race, disability and gender equality plans are readily available and
- that the governors, staff, pupils, and their parents and guardians know about them;
- producing regular information for staff and governors about the plans and how they are working;
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out;
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including racist bullying, homophobic bullying and bullying related to gender or disability.

All staff are responsible for:

- dealing with racist, homophobic and other unacceptable incidents involving discrimination and prejudice;
- being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- promoting equal opportunities and good race relations;
- avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, disability, sexuality, religion or gender
- keeping up to date with the law on discrimination;
- taking up training and learning opportunities.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- respecting and following, our Equality Scheme.

How Reading School consults with disabled parents, staff, young people and others in the community regarding disability.

Involvement of disabled pupils, staff and parents

We consult with the following:

- The parents of disabled children who would like to come to Reading School to identify particular needs and to ensure that, where possible, these could be met.
- The parents of disabled pupils who have entered the school and the pupils themselves to ensure that all of their needs are being met.
- Reading Borough Council in order to ensure that as facilities are developed they meet the requirements of the DDA

- Local Authority buildings representatives in order to ensure that any modification of the buildings attempted does not contravene legislation to protect any pupils, staff or visitors to the school.

Reading School will continue to use these mechanisms for consultation in the future but will also seek to widen the spectrum of those consulted, specifically:

- Through encouraging disabled pupils to have representation on the School Council.
- Collect and collate the views of disabled pupils.
- To include surveys questions about access to the curriculum and the facilities by the disabled.

Information Gathering

The school has collected information on:

- Pupils with disabilities at Reading School through parental/carer contact with the Registrar and SENCO at point of entry to the school.
- Staff with disabilities at point of entry to the school.
- Questionnaires to stakeholders including student council, parents via the website and staff.

Parents of new pupils are made aware that they can request letters, newsletters etc in different formats (e.g. in Braille, in simplified language, on audio-tape or video-tape, using a symbol system). Or alternatively that information can be emailed to home so that parents can enlarge documents to the size they need or use their own software to access information.

| Priority | Action Required | Success Criteria | Timescale | Responsible Person |
|---|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Include questions on parental questionnaire regarding access to school (physical and information) for any of our disabled community members. | Change current parental questionnaire to reflect this . Ensure that feedback is shared with the full Governing Body and is acted upon. | The school responds to the needs of any of our disabled community in response to feedback from the questionnaire. | Lent Term 2010 | Principal Governing Body SENCO |
| Approach a member of our community who is physically disabled and ask them to complete a tour of school and facilities to judge accessibility for us. | Set date for audit of school buildings and add feedback to agenda item for Gov.Body meeting | Possible areas of reduced access have been identified. The school is able to plan to either improve access or rearrange the geography of activities to ensure equality of access. | Audit to be completed by June 2010 Action Plan in place & costed SBDP 2010-2011 | Principal |

It is a requirement that disabled pupils, staff and those using school services should be involved in the production of the Disability Equality Scheme. Reading 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 questionnaires)
- Questionnaires, for instance:
 - Parental view questionnaire for Statement reviews
 - Parental view questionnaire for IEP/Progress reviews
 - Student Voice questionnaire
- Drop-in/ informal sessions with SENCO and/or Principal

The recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees

The Disability Discrimination Act makes it a requirement to make reasonable adjustment to the recruitment process if an applicant makes the school aware that they have a disability. This applies to the entire recruitment process, from advertisement to appointment.

Recruitment of Staff

Reading School follows procedures in the recruitment of teaching and support staff to ensure equality of opportunity.

Reading School will request disclosure of disability information which will then be logged within school on appointment.

Development of Staff

From 2010-2011, Reading School will collect and analyse the information in respect of the representation of disabled staff:

- in all aspects of the work of the school, for example: teaching and associate staff at all levels of seniority in the school;
- amongst those awarded Teaching and Learning Responsibility Payments;
- as permanent or temporary members of staff, full- or part-time;
- in training and professional development opportunities;
- in disciplinary and capability proceedings;
- in harassment and bullying procedures;
- among those who take sick leave; and
- among those leaving the profession early.

Retention of Staff

In order to retain disabled staff, the annual revision of the DES will involve an analysis of whether appropriate adjustments are being made and of the support provided to enable disabled staff to return to work or continue in service.

Each disabled member of staff leaving the school will be consulted annually and be asked to complete an exit survey on whether the school has met their needs and whether it is a disabled friendly place to work which encourages diversity in its workforce.

Action Plan of a minimum of 3 specific points to address the needs of Reading School.

An action plan starts by completing an audit of resources, training and systems. This leads onto an action plan with clear timings, responsibilities and success criteria/impact statements. Reading School needs to refer to the Duty so that the actions are spread over a range of the points. The third target is linked to recruitment.

To encourage appointees (who have not done so at the recruitment stage) to indicate at induction whether they consider themselves disabled.

To make every effort when employees become disabled, to ensure that they stay in employment.

To continue to monitor the reasons for rejection of disabled applicants

It is important that the policy is dated at the time of writing, a review date is given and designated staff responsible for both writing and reviewing are listed. A member of the school's governing body should be part of these named persons.

As part of the school's self-evaluation processes, from April 2010 the Vice-Principal will assess the impact of the Disability Equality Scheme and revise it accordingly for the forthcoming academic year (September 2010- August 2011)

The main mechanisms which the school will use to reach judgements will be:

- issues identified through surveys
- Quantitative data on the achievements of disabled pupils.
- Analysis of SENCO Reports
- As part of Blink LA Inspection

A report updating the Governing Body will be presented annually during the Michaelmas Term.

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|--------------|----------------|
| Compiled by: | Vice-Principal |
| Approved by: | Governing Body |
| Signed: | |
| Date: | April 2010 |
| Review Date: | April 2011 |
| Status: | Statutory |

READING SCHOOL DES ACTION PLAN 2010-2011

| 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 |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|------------|-----------------|
| 1)Increasing equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people | Communication between groups | Liaise with student voice Appoint representative on student voice | SENCO Report to SLT | Annually | Principal SENCO | April 2010 | July 2011 |
| 2)Promote positive attitudes towards disabled pupils | Need for positive images of disabled people | Visits from disabled people to be planned into assemblies and SEAL topics., linked to Paraolympics Ordering of resources to include positive disability images and information. | Impact of SEAL to be reviewed by SEAL Coordinator | Annually | TLR member of staff responsible for SEAL LRC Coordinator | April 2010 | December 2010 |
| 3)Promotion of equality - recruitment and Human Resources issues | Importance of compliance with 2005 and 2007 Regulations | Vice-Principal to review recruitment procedures with reference to disability | Evaluation report Completion of SEF | Every six months monitoring. Annual Report | Vice-Principal | April 2010 | June 2011 |