

Accessibility Policy

Introduction

We value the individuality of all the students. We are committed to giving all of our students every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of students' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations for all. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all students matter. This policy helps to ensure that Canterbury Cross Primary School promotes the individuality of all students, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 aims to end discrimination against people with disabilities and to improve access in all areas of life. Since 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and Local Education Authorities to discriminate against students with disabilities in admissions and exclusions, in education, and in associated services.

From 1st October 2004 it is unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities by preventing them from having access to premises. Along with all other public buildings, our school is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable access.

Our Accessibility Plan details the changes required to our buildings and to other aspects of our school, so that we fulfil our legal requirements, and remove barriers to inclusion for all students and staff with disabilities.

1. The purpose and direction of the school's scheme

1.1 The purpose of the school's scheme is to meet the duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the school.

- Establish with all staff overall vision of the duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled students, staff and parents.
- Six elements of the duty are:
 - Promoting equality of opportunity
 - Eliminating discrimination
 - Eliminating harassment
 - Promoting positive attitudes
 - Encouraging participation
 - Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

Action by SLT:

- Raise awareness of 6 elements with all staff, governors, parents and students.
- Refer to 'Implementing the DDA in Schools'
- Ensure understanding of the broad definition of Disability within the DDA.
- Encourage disclosure of disability by students, parents, staff and other users of the school.

1.2 Involvement of disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the school.

The school will consider and plan to involve disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the school. The school will continue to take into account the preferred means of communication for those with whom they are consulting. We will ensure we will involve a range of people and hear a range of views. The views of the disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the school will be used to set priorities.

1.3. Information gathering

The collection of information is crucial to supporting Canterbury Cross School in making decisions about what actions would best improve opportunities and outcomes for disabled students, staff and parents. The information will also subsequently help us to review our performance. Information will be detailed enough to enable us to measure the delivery on disability equality, to assess the impact of the changes we have made and to help us identify which of our priorities have been achieved. Identifying disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the school is key to the development of our accessibility plan.

1.4 Definition

The DDA 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.’

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.

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments. 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 effect on normal day-to-day activities is on 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;
- perception of risk of physical danger.

Some people are automatically covered by the definition: those with cancer, multiple sclerosis, HIV infection or a severe disfigurement. There are special provisions for people with progressive or recurring conditions.

1.5 Information to be gathered

- Recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees
- Education opportunities available to and achievement of disabled students
- Disabled parents guardians and other users of the school (All efforts to be made to collect information)

1.4. Impact assessment.

Impact assessment refers to the review of all current and proposed policies and practices in order to formally assess their impact on disabled people. Impact assessments will be an on-going process to ensure that our policies and practices develop and evolve and will be incorporated into the school’s planned review and revision of every policy. Every new policy or procedure will be drawn up with regard to our duty to promote disability equality.

2. Identifying the main priorities for and deciding actions

The priorities for the Accessibility Plan will be set in the light of:

- an examination of the information that the school has gathered; and

- the messages that the school has heard from the disabled students, staff and parents who have been involved in the development of the scheme.

Some of the priorities identified will themselves be about:

- improving information;
- improving the involvement of disabled students, staff and parents.

3. Making it happen

3.1. Implementation

The scheme will be supported by detailed action plans with oversight of the Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body so that progress can be checked.

The Action plan will show:

- clear allocation of lead responsibility;
- clear allocation of resources;
- an indication of expected outcomes or performance criteria;
- clear timescales;
- a specified date and process for review.

3.2 The physical environment

We will endeavour to improve provision for disabled students and staff by developing the physical environment of the school, within the limits of the resources available.

Where necessary, we will try to improve the following: access to the school,; movement around the building, for example by adaptations, such as improved colour schemes, for people with impaired sight; lowered handles for doors; visual steps on stairs; accommodation within the building, by providing toilets for disabled students, sound-proofing for students with impaired hearing and soundfield systems to enhance acoustic noise in targeted classrooms; rooms for physiotherapy etc; furniture; information and communication technology, by selecting appropriate hardware and software; signage, by putting it in clear print, as and when required.

3.3 The curriculum

We use teaching strategies to enhance learning and participation in a broad and balanced curriculum. We find ways in which all students can take part in sport, music and drama. We plan our out-of-school activities and school trips in such a way that students with disabilities can participate within their capabilities.

3.4 Staffing

When advertising posts, or interviewing applicants, or deciding on appointments, the governors and staff will follow the necessary procedures, and will not discriminate against people with disabilities.

Should a member of staff become disabled, the Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body will make reasonable adjustments to that person's employment arrangements, or to the premises, in order to enable them to continue in post.

All members of staff are entitled to professional development and training and are expected to take advantage of a continuous programme of professional development.

Canterbury Cross School will liaise with specialists to support individual students.

Among these specialists are the following: physiotherapists, educational psychologists, speech therapists, doctors, the school nurse, social workers, and the staff of the voluntary and statutory agencies. We benefit from the LA's advice, and its provision through the Physical and Sensory Support Service including Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired services.

3.5 Health and safety

Members of staff follow the school procedures both for the storage and for the administration of medicines to students. We also have procedures for when blood or other bodily substances have to be cleared away.

The school has members of staff qualified in giving first-aid treatment and the emergency services will be called, should they be required.

3.6 Information

Information normally provided in writing (lesson content, texts, library resources and information about school events) will be made available in alternative formats that are clear and user-friendly, such as audio tape, and large print, or it may be transmitted orally, or through lip-speaking or sign language, or through a recognized symbol system, or through ICT when necessary.

We always take account of disabilities, be they the students' or their parents'. For example, communication with a parent who is visually impaired may need to be by telephone rather than by letter, or if hearing impaired through text/email.

3.7 Reporting

We will report annually on the progress made on the action plan and its effect on policy and practice within the school.

4 Policy into practice

The Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body are responsible for the school's duty not to discriminate.

A named governor and a designated member of staff jointly discharge the responsibility of ensuring that we meet our obligation not to discriminate.

The Head Teacher will ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities to all students without exception.

All members of staff are fully committed to the policy of not discriminating against students, parents or staff with disabilities.

Parents and guardians are asked to keep us informed about any relevant issues, so that we can work towards resolving them.

5. Monitoring

We have high expectations of all our students. We monitor a range of data to make sure that all students are making the best progress possible, and that no groups of students are underachieving.

We monitor:

- admissions;
- attainment;
- exclusions;
- rewards and sanctions;
- parental and student questionnaires.

6 Monitoring and review

The Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body has a named governor with responsibility for matters of disability discrimination. It is this governor's responsibility to keep the Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body informed of any new regulations, and to ensure that the school regularly reviews its processes and procedures. The governor in question also liaises with the LA and other external agencies, to ensure that the school's procedures are in line with those of the LA.

The Head Teacher implements the school's accessibility policy on a day-to-day basis, and ensures that all staff are aware of the details of the policy as it applies to them.

The Head teacher reports to the Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body annually on matters regarding disability discrimination.

This policy will be reviewed at any time on a request from the Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body, or at least once every two years.

6. Reviewing and revising the plan

As part of the review of the plan, we will:

- revisit the information that was used to identify the priorities for the scheme; and
- re-examine the information to see if actions that the school has taken have affected opportunities and outcomes for disabled students, staff and parents.

The review of the plan will inform its revision: how the school sets new priorities and new action plans for the next plan. This process will continue to:

- involve disabled students, staff and parents; and
- be based on information that the school has gathered.