



Willow Tree Academy



Disability and Equality Policy 2020

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Statement of Intent

Herringthorpe Junior School, as part of Willow Tree Academy, is committed to providing outstanding provision and teaching and learning experiences for **all** children.

Herringthorpe Junior School has high aspirations for all pupils and expects them to be able to participate in all aspects of school life as well as reach their full personal potential. The school is fully committed to equal opportunities in line with the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement, which states – “When planning, teachers should set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve, including boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, pupils with disabilities, pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupils of different ethnic groups including travelers, refugees and asylum seekers, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Teachers need to be aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths which will influence the way in which they learn. Teachers should plan their approaches to teaching and learning so that all pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively”.

Herringthorpe Junior School is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion across our school, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Under equality and diversity legislation schools have responsibilities and duties relating to:

- Gender/ Gender Reassignment
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Disability
- Age

For all pupils, including those with a disability, the school will:

- Set appropriate learning challenges;
- Respond to pupils’ diverse needs;
- Overcome all potential barriers to learning, and provide access to all elements of school life, for individuals and groups of pupils
- Have high expectations for all pupils in all aspects of school life.

The facilities in our school building are fully inclusive of all children, including those with additional needs and disabilities, for example, disabled toilet facilities, signage in other languages, ramped access, sensory rooms and gardens. The school will continue to identify and remove barriers to all disabled pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors to school, in every area of school life and make everyone feel welcome.

The Governing Body of Herringthorpe Junior School will endeavor to fulfill the three key duties towards disabled pupils as outlined in Part Four of the Disability Discrimination Act. These are -

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

The Governing Body will also ensure that all members of the school community understand and are committed to these three key duties and that in the writing of policies or improving the quality of school life for any disabled pupils, the views of those directly involved will be sought and where possible acted upon.

The National Context

Children and Families Act 2014

Within our academy we closely follow the guidelines set out in the Children and Families Act, which was brought into law on 1st September 2014, stating that LA's are required to:

- Identify children and young people (up to the age of 25) with SEN.
- Assess the child or young person's education, health and care needs, taking account of educational, medical, psychological and other factors, where necessary.
- Prepare a formal education, health and care (EHC) plan for those needs, and specify the provision which should be made to meet them.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 (amended in March 2015)

The majority of provisions in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 set duties for LAs to assess educational, health and care needs, and to create, amend and withdraw EHC Plans.

Within Willow Tree Academy, our provision for SEND is needs led and is in line with the local authority guidance. We work with their team closely to ensure that the best provision for these children is achieved.

The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014

Budgets associated with SEND allowances are managed by our finance officer, in collaboration with the LA and the SENCO in school. High quality resources, teaching staff and training are ways in which this budget is used.

SEND Code of Practice

See Inclusion policy for how we implement this policy in Herringthorpe Junior School and across Willow Tree Academy

The Equality Act 2010

This national policy is adhered to as part of day to day practise and all staff are aware of the need and implications of ensuring equality for all is high on the agenda towards achieving outstanding Quality First Teaching and provision for the children we teach. The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have regard to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and requires that:

- Schools must not treat pupils with SEND less favorably because of a protected characteristic – disability is a protected characteristic.
- Schools must take reasonable steps to avoid putting these pupils at a substantial disadvantage, including by providing auxiliary aids and services as part of the reasonable adjustments duty.
- Schools must prepare accessibility plans, showing how they will improve access to education for disabled pupils.

When is a person disabled?

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse affect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

As part of the Revised Code of Practice implemented in 2015, disability was defined as; *‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’*. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: *‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’*. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer.

Alongside the definitions that can be found within the Equality Act 2010, Willow Tree Academy have used the Code of Practice to reform their policies in relation to pupils with SEND. From this, we know;

- We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- We will not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person’s disability
- We will make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. T
- We will have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and nondisabled children and young people.
- We must include an overview of our care and the services and provision we have for all children as part of the local offer
- We will set objectives which are specific and measurable.

Access to Support

It is vital that the school works closely with a range of agencies to provide the best possible support for pupils.

These include:

- Hearing Impaired Service
- Visually Impaired Service
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Autism Communication Team
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Team
- Educational Psychology Service
- Parent Partnership Service
- Learning Support Services

Within all of our schools at Willow Tree Academy -

The Governing Body will carry out its duties under disability legislation. This responsibility is delegated to the Headteacher in the day to day management of the school.

The new general duty means that school's Governing Body must, in carrying out functions, have due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminate discrimination which is unlawful under the Act;
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encourage participation by disabled people in school life;
- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where this involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

Our Disability Equality Scheme aims to:

- Involve disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and visitors in any decisions we make.
- Find out what barriers are faced by disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and visitors and make all reasonable adjustments to remove them.
- Find out what disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and visitors need and which of these needs are the most important to them, and make every attempt reasonably possible to meet those needs
- Make sure we meet our legal duties.
- Ensure all children and adults in our school community know what our responsibilities are.
- Explain how we make things fairer for disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and visitors

- Provide relevant information about our involvement, assessments and training arrangements.
- Work in partnership with other disability organisations to prevent ignorance and prejudice within the school.
- Show what has changed as a result of the implementation of our equality action plan.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our actions, adjusting plans when necessary.
- Report to governors and parents on an annual basis.

Gathering and using information

Herringthorpe Junior School (Willow Tree Academy) will gather information from a variety of sources, including annual staff and parent surveys, meetings with pupils with a disability and termly review meetings with pupils, parents/carers, staff and appropriate agencies.

This information will be used to help the school to meet the needs of all pupils and adults with a disability to ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made to overcome any barriers, which may include the following -

- sensory [vision or hearing impaired]
- physical
- social

Audit of current provision to ensure Equality

- The curriculum is broad and teaches about equality
- The new RSE (Relationships and Sex education has become statutory and covers discriminating between sex and gender)
- The entrances are accessible.
- There is a new quiet area in the yard for all pupils to access
- Time Out spaces are designated for individuals in school
- There is very good access to and support network from, other professionals and agencies for staff in school who work with children with a specific need or disability
- Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out for both in school and off site activities and these always take into account any child with a specific need or disability. Staff will also consult with other professionals when carrying out a risk assessment for a visit where a child with a disability is to attend - for example LA Health and Safety department
- Care plans are effectively implemented and reviewed regularly for those with medical needs/ disabilities
- Staff work closely with outside providers of after school clubs to ensure that any information about a specific child is communicated to the relevant party and reasonable adjustment made to allow a child with a disability to attend, for example school sport club.

For any children joining the school we would seek to begin the evidence gathering as far in advance as possible and liaise with all relevant agencies to facilitate the smooth transition into school for both the child and family.

Involvement and Consultation

Within our academy, each of our schools will involve and consult with –

- Pupils where they are able to comment on and have views about their needs
- Parents and carers concerning the needs of their child and or the needs of the parent or family member with regard to a disability
- All staff in school
- Visitors to school events or those who use the school building at other times

As a school we will consult –

- Regularly in the case of children with a specific disability
- As appropriate e.g. for parents/ visitors visiting school for an event such as a concert or performance
- Previous schools prior to a child with a disability joining our school

As a school we will consult by –

- Inviting all relevant parties to regular review meetings
- Ensuring that all new parents and families are informed of this scheme and access arrangements in school as part of the induction process
- Ensuring that all new members of staff are informed of this scheme and the school's ethos and policy towards any pupil or adult with a disability
- Ensuring that all members of staff are aware of any support available to them should they have a disability
- Ensuring that we meet with all appropriate agencies in order to access training and ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made.

Accessibility Plan

Possible identified barriers

1) Small classrooms, sometimes large classes

- For children with a physical disability (eg walking frame/wheelchair) ensure that risk assessments are carried out, also re-arrange furniture as appropriate.

Responsibility - Headteacher

Timescale – as required

2) Provision of resources

- Liaise with appropriate agencies regarding furniture, cutlery etc

Responsibility - Headteacher

Timescale - as required

3) Off site visits

- Conduct risk assessments
- Liaise with other agencies re reasonable adjustments

Responsibility - Headteacher, class teachers

Timescale - as required

4) Sensory Barriers - Sight/hearing impairment

In the case of vision impairment, school would seek to do the following -

- Consult with the person concerned or in the case of a very young child the parent/carer on specific needs
- Consult with and take advice from the appropriate vision impaired support service in Rotherham LA
- Ensure that all communication documents are accessible to parents/carers/members of the school community eg Braille or auditory access
- Ensure that all communication documents are accessible to staff
- Ensure that children have appropriate support eg seating arrangements, enlarged text, appropriate level of lighting
- When re-decoration of the building takes place [internally and externally] consult with the appropriate body and give regard to the needs of those with a visual impairment in the choice of colours.
- Off site visits are regularly used in school. Staff must conduct appropriate risk assessment, take advice from appropriate agencies eg Health and Safety and make all reasonable adjustments for all pupils to access as much of the visit as possible

In the case of hearing impairment, school would seek to do the following -

- Consult with the person concerned or in the case of a very young child the parent/carer on specific needs
- Consult with and take advice from the appropriate hearing impaired support service in Rotherham LA
- In the case of pupils, access support materials for classroom eg hearing aid and speaker to be used by teacher/adult working with pupil
- Investigate installation of hearing loop system to aid access for parents/ carers/ visitors at concerts, assemblies etc
- Headteacher and governors to assess budget/funding implications for loop system

- Teachers/adults in school to support children to ensure they are seated in class to maximize the use of acoustics which may vary from room to room in school and be dependent upon which subject is being taught
- Off site visits are regularly used in school and staff must conduct appropriate risk assessments, take advice from appropriate agencies eg Health and Safety and make all reasonable adjustments for all pupils to access as much of the visit as possible

Responsibility – Headteacher, relevant staff in school and Governors

Timescale – as and when appropriate

School will regularly review the needs of all children with a disability in the following ways –

- Hold regular review meetings with parents/carers, SENCO, Headteacher, relevant staff and the pupil
- School will review risk assessments for both onsite and off site curriculum activities and make all reasonable adjustments to enable access to the activities on offer
- School will consult with leaders of after school activities and make all reasonable adjustment to allow access for any pupils with a disability
- Ensure that parents are fully supported with how to help their child get the most out of their time in school
- Provide access to the school curriculum for all disabled pupils which allows them to meet their full potential by –
- All staff having high expectations in all aspects of school life
- Seek specialist advice on access to subjects such as PE for children with a physical/visual impairment, music for children with a hearing impairment
- Set targets which are challenging but realistic and which take into account the needs of the child
- Monitor the progress of disabled children and adapt targets, teaching and learning appropriately. (Use ‘P’ levels when appropriate)
- Ensure that staff training is up to date and that ongoing support is available from within school and outside agencies

Responsibility – Headteacher, SENCO, teachers, support staff, Governors and parents

Awareness raising with pupils/staff/parents/carers and visitors

To ensure the full inclusion of all pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors to school we will –

- Ensure that staff are trained and prepared for any children with a specific need/disability, as far in advance of them starting at this school as possible

- Raise awareness of all staff in school even if they might not specifically work with the child eg through information sharing staff meetings led by an appropriate professional
- Raise awareness of pupils through class discussion, PSHE lessons, visitors to school eg someone who uses a guide dog
- Actively promote the social inclusion of pupils with a disability eg use the support staff linked to specific children to facilitate this. Ensure that children with disabilities are protected from bullying.
- Ensure that TAs provide effective support for pupils, but at the same time promote independence
- Ensure that information is included in all relevant documentation eg induction pack for new families to the school. Staff handbook and induction materials for new staff

Responsibility – Headteacher, SENCO and Governors

Consultation with disabled pupils/staff/parents/carers and visitors to the school

Ensure the inclusion of children with a disability through –

- Regular consultation with pupil and parent/carer
- Making reasonable adjustments eg timetable alterations, extra time for lunch
- Being aware of any parents who may need help accessing school for any reason and making reasonable adjustments eg special seating arrangements at a concert or performance

Responsibility – Headteacher, Governors, staff in school and parents

Timescale – as appropriate

Review and Revision

A working party of staff/governors will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy annually and adjustments to the scheme will be made as necessary.

To be reviewed - September 2021