

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME POLICY

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SIGNATURE:

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This policy was written for Greatwood by Laura Wickham and updated by Helen Yeadon. It will be reviewed annually and updated in line with any new recommendations or legislation as it is made available.

Introduction

This scheme sets out how the directors will promote equality of opportunity for disabled people at Greatwood. We aim to continue to develop our culture of inclusion and diversity which enables all learners and staff to feel they can disclose their disability and participate fully in educational activities here. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that these activities are as accessible as possible, aiming to remove barriers to learning and achievement. We believe diversity is a strength to be respected and celebrated by everyone who learns or works at Greatwood.

The Equality Act 2010

Took over from The Disability Discrimination Act.

The purpose and direction of Greatwood's scheme

The purpose of Greatwood's scheme is to meet the duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the centre, and applies to all disabled learners, staff and those using Greatwood educational services. Greatwood supports the rights of disabled students by giving greater legal protection against discrimination, it emphasises the legal duty on education providers, employers and service providers to make reasonable adjustments so disabled people can take part in education, use services and work.

- 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 towards disabled people
 - Encouraging participation
 - Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

Action by person responsible for DES:

- Raise awareness of 8 elements with all staff, directors, schools, parents and students
- Ensure understanding of the broad definition of Disability within the DDA
- Encourage disclosure of disability by students, parents, staff and other users of Greatwood
- Ensure the involvement of disabled students, staff, parents and visitors
- Arrange for the gathering of information
- Consider arrangements for impact assessment

Involvement of disabled students, staff, schools, parents and other users of Greatwood

- Greatwood will consider and plan to involve disabled students, staff, schools, parents and other users of Greatwood.

- Greatwood 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, schools, parents and other users of Greatwood will be used to set priorities.

Information gathering

The collection of information is crucial to supporting Greatwood 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 Greatwood is key to the development of the DES.

Definition

The Equality Act 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, 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.

No-one is to be disadvantaged owing to Race, Sex, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, Gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

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. Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well recognised”.

Information to be gathered

- Recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees
- Education opportunities available to and achievement of disabled students
- Disabled parents carers and other users of Greatwood (All efforts to be made to collect information)
- Make decisions on how the information is to be held at Greatwood, and how it interlinks with other registers.

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 Greatwood'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.

Identifying the main priorities for and deciding actions

The priorities for the Disability Equality Scheme action plan will be set in the light of:

- an examination of the information that Greatwood have gathered; and
- the messages that Greatwood has heard from the disabled students, staff, schools 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.

Implementation

The scheme will be supported by action plans and incorporated into Greatwood's Improvement Plan, with oversight of the trustees and directors 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.

Reporting

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

Reviewing and revising the scheme

As part of the review of the scheme, 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 Greatwood has taken has affected opportunities and outcomes for disabled pupils, staff and parents.

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

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