

**The Hayfield School Policy Statement: DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY (DED)
Reviewed: January 2007**

As a school, we have to accept a Disability Equality Duty (DED), which, as from 2007, is a legal duty to take proactive steps to ensure disabled pupils, staff, governors, parents, carers and visitors are treated equally and fairly. A similar duty was introduced for race equality in 2002 and will be in force for gender from April 2007 – they apply across the whole of the public sector and are based on the premise that societal structures can disable individuals not simply the nature of an individual's impairment.

We thus all have a general duty to seek to:-

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination under the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act
- Eliminate disability related harassment
- Promote positive attitudes to disabled people
- Encourage participation of disabled people in public life
- Take positive steps to meet disabled peoples' needs
- Ensure a mesh between Disability Accessibility Plans and our DED
- Develop a DED Action Plan relating to curriculum, environmental, and information issues, which is monitored in progress (with a 3 year DED revision)
- Collate, collect, analyse data on 'DED in action' with an annual report on progress to Governors
- Consult with the disabled on the nature of the DED and its development

The Governing Body has three key duties to disabled pupils and staff:-

- Not to treat them less fairly for a reason relating to their disability
- To make reasonable adjustments to prevent substantial discouragement
- To seek to improve access to education and job

Disability is much wider than observable physical (mobility), or sensory (hearing or sight) impairment and includes:

- Pupils with special needs relating to learning disabilities, ADHD, and obsessive behaviour problems
- Those with HIV, cancer, MS, diabetes, severe disfigurement, epilepsy, eating disorders

Schools have people (pupils, staff, parents/carers) under these categories with a duty to them as an employer, service provider and an education provider. Hence there will be a need to monitor whether our DED is proactive where appropriate in our generic policies; SEF; SIP; management practice; in differentiating in lessons and homework (where the disability needs this); in involving disabled parents or visiting them at home; in combating any bullying name calling; in the teaching of disabled on site (ECM!); and in promoting positive attitudes to disability via Citizenship/PSE ... etc. A formal definition of 'Disability' is given in the Appendix!

ACCESSIBILITY

To date, we have tackled accessibility via:

- The provision of two disabled toilets (2000 and 2003)
- Disabled parking provision (2005)
- Access 'ramp' on approach to certain doors and improved foyer entrance doors
- Disabled toilet and shower facilities in new synthetic pitch changing rooms (2005)
- A lift in new Science block (2003)

We have an Accessibility Plan approved by the Governors in 2005-06.

INFORMATION

We are continuing to develop our data collection and information on:-

- Disabled staff.
- Disabled pupils currently on role or likely to be admitted into Year 7 from pyramid schools, including pupils with disabled parents/carers.
- Disabled parents/carers who may need special appointments at parents' evenings, or arrangements of social events.
- Communicating with other agencies over a person's disability in order that we can seek to involve them in developing our DED, arrange 'impact' assessments to monitor problems and successes, and personalise a person's education or involvement (in so far as this can be achieved within financial parameters and without creating major disadvantages to others?)

Part of this 'information' is to ensure that all staff (teaching and non teaching) are aware of:

- The intent and rationale of our DED.
- How they can help to ensure its reality in respect of individuals.
- How best they can incorporate pupils with disabilities in lessons and curriculum and extra curricular activity.
- Their role in delivering DED and in tracking pupils, or line managing a colleague with disability problems to check on education progress or work opportunity progress.

Any information gathered on an individual's disabilities should of course be sensitively handled but put to good use on a 'need to know basis', or for analysis, whether it relates to pupils or employees.

'Access to work' funding is available for adults in certain circumstances to meet costs arising from making reasonable adjustments.

Employing a disabled person can have an extra bonus in:

- Bringing life experience and new skills to the school
- Providing a role model in coping with disability
- Developing in-house expertise

INTENT

Thus whatever the disability, the school seeks to:

- Ensure access to a full curriculum in so far as this is possible
- Provide focussed 'career and development' support and progression including work experience placements for 14-19 year olds
- Create access to extra curricular opportunities if desired
- Allow access to positions of responsibility on School Council etc
- Consider Health and Safety issues relating to an individual in the light of his or her participation (eg. PE, Outdoor Pursuits)
- Ensure emergency procedures are sensible in case of a Fire Alarm etc
- Develop Disability Action Plans (DAP's) for individuals with regular reviews
- Ensure key on site 'medical' facilities for individuals are available as required

The 'outcome' of objectives is more important than the process!

- Is a disabled person or carer given ease of 'access' to events?
- Can a disabled pupil cope with a fire drill, or emergency, or lift procedures?
- Are there ways in which a disabled pupil can access a field trip, or sport activity?
- Can a pupil's medicines be managed in school to minimise embarrassment or curriculum disruption?
- 'Who' is to mentor/'champion' a disabled pupil?
- Is any harassment/bullying of disabled pupils picked up and addressed?
- Can LSA support be provided where appropriate?
- Can Catering Services cope with dietary problems?
- Do we check that outside providers have a DED policy?
- HAVE WE INVOLVED THE DISABLED IN OUR DED DEVELOPMENTS?
- Do our DED and ACCESSIBILITY PLAN mesh?

CODA

The above is in essence our draft DED for consultation with 'disabled' people on site, or likely to be on site. The Action Plan for 2007 will be to follow up all issues mentioned to ensure we are compliant and proactive not laissez-faire. Hence:-

- We need a central register for disabled pupils and staff and parents/carers (in addition to that which we already have for pupils with Learning Difficulties, or general medical problems)
- We need to ensure each disabled individual on site has a DAP (Disability Action Plan) and is regularly reviewed on this by Year Tutor (or Line Manager if a member of staff)
- We need to ensure that where staff absent due to their disability this is noted separately to general absence reasons
- Within our overall anti-harassment and bullying strategies we are alert to bullying of the disabled
- We need to seek to achieve access by disabled pupils who wish to participate in extra curricular activities
- We need clear policies to ensure the 'disabled' are assisted in the light of an emergency on site, or know what to do (i.e. use of lift)
- We need to be conscious of the problems of disabled parents/carers, or site visitors
- We need to seek to ensure staff have First Aid training to know how to react in certain situations (i.e. epileptic fit; diabetic issues)
- We need to seek to differentiate classroom activities and make special arrangements to seek to help a disabled pupil.

Whilst we may always have sought to achieve the above we now have a more formalised duty to do so. There will always be some problems:

- e.g. assisting a disabled pupil can undermine the education of others
 - e.g. some extra curricular activities may not prove easy to offer to a disabled person
 - e.g. certain arrangements have a cost and our budget is not elastic
 - e.g. some disabled people do not like a focus on their disability
 - e.g. some staff rolls may not be able to be adequately fulfilled by a person with a particular disability.
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