



**Rudolf Steiner School**

**Accessibility Action Plan 2016 – 2019**

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## **Section 1 Introduction**

### **Disability Discrimination Act**

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably 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.
- to welcome the views of disabled stakeholders to help improve the provision in our school.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of Lindley Junior School to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- 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.
- to ensure all school policies, plans and procedures are reviewed as part of a 3 year programme and amended if necessary regarding general duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed, and revised as necessary and reported on annually. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan. The plan must be renewed every three years. The current timeframe is 2016-2019.

## **Disability Equality Duty**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The duties from the DDA 2005 have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010 so that it now places a duty on all public authorities, including schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The duty does not create new individual rights for disabled people. The duty provides a framework for schools to carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way. The duty thus reinforces the pre-existing duties under the Act. There are both general and specific duties. These duties are described in more detail in the next section.

Schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Schools will also need to have regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must regularly review them.

## **Section 2 Definitions and Duties**

### **Disability Discrimination Act**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (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'.

The definition can include a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). An impairment does not of itself mean that a pupil is disabled. It is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities that has to be considered.

The test of whether an impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects 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

A pupil's ability to memorise, concentrate, learn, speak, move is central to their education. An impairment that has a long-term and substantial effect on a child's ability to do these things may therefore amount to a disability.

## **Long-term and substantial**

The expressions 'long-term' and 'substantial' are somewhat misleading. 'Long-term' is defined in the DDA as 12 months or more. Clearly this rules out conditions such as a broken limb which is likely to mend within that time. 'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial' but it may helpfully be thought of as meaning 'having some substance.' The combined effect of these two terms is to include more people in the definition of disability than is commonly anticipated.

The definition in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is broad. It includes more pupils than many people think. There is a significant overlap with pupils with special educational needs, though the definition of special educational needs does not cover all disabled children, for example: pupils with medical conditions, disfigurements and other impairments may count as disabled but may not have special educational needs.

The existence of an impairment or condition does not depend on an official diagnosis. If the impairment is long-term and has a substantial adverse effect, it falls within the terms of the Act whether there has been an official diagnosis or not.

## **The Duties in Part 4**

It is unlawful for schools to discriminate against disabled pupils. A school discriminates if:

- It treats a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably than another for a reason related to their disability and without justification
- It fails, without justification, to take reasonable steps to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. This duty is often known as the 'reasonable adjustments' duty

The reasonable adjustments duty requires schools to think ahead, anticipate the barriers that disabled pupils may face and remove or minimise them before a disabled pupil is placed at a substantial disadvantage. Reasonable adjustments may need to be made in admissions, exclusions and 'education and associated services,' a term that covers every aspect of the life of the school. A Code of Practice, published by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) provides guidance on the way that the duties operate.

In general, it is the governing body of the school that is the 'responsible body' for the DDA duties and needs to ensure that everyone in the school, staff or volunteer, is aware of the duties owed to disabled pupils. To avoid discrimination against any disabled pupil, all staff need to implement the duties in relation to their area of responsibility.

If parents think that their child has been discriminated against, they have a right of redress by making a claim of disability discrimination to the SEN and Disability Tribunal. If the Tribunal finds that a school has discriminated unlawfully against a disabled Pupil it can order any remedy that it sees fit, except financial compensation.

**The Equality Act 2010** introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies, and extends to certain protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy, and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

All public bodies were previously bound by three separate sets of duties to promote disability, race and gender equality. The simpler, less bureaucratic, PSED has replaced those three duties. With the PSED, as with the previous general duties, schools are subject to the need to have due regard to the three elements outlined above. What having “due regard” means in practice has been defined in case law and means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty.

For schools this means:

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action and must assess whether it may have particular implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep them under review on a continuing basis.
- The PSED has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes or following a particular process.
- Schools can’t delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else.

### **Due Regard**

The duty to have “due regard” to equality considerations means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, thought must be given to the equality implications. The significance of those implications – and the amount of thought that needs to be devoted to them - will vary depending on the nature of the decision. For example, a decision to change the time of school assembly is unlikely to have a significant impact on any group. On the other hand, deciding when and where to have a school trip may raise a range of considerations: are the facilities for boys and girls equivalent; are they accessible to disabled pupils; does the date cut across any religious holidays and so exclude some pupils, and so on. An initiative to raise pupil attainment in a single sex school might not have any gender implications, but there could be race issues that need to be considered.

It is good practice for schools to keep a note of any equality consideration, although this does not necessarily need to take the form of a formal equality analysis. Publishing it will help to demonstrate that the due regard duty is being fulfilled.

It is good practice for schools to keep a written record to show that they have actively considered their equality duties and asked themselves relevant questions. There is no legal requirement to produce a formal equality impact assessment document, although for key decisions this

might be a helpful tool. The duty only needs to be implemented in a light-touch way, proportionate to the issue being considered.

### **The Specific Duty**

The specific duties require schools:

- to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- to prepare and publish equality objectives

### **Section 3 Vision and Values**

*Our school's commitment to equal opportunities is integral to our school core aims.*

*The school:*

- sets suitable learning challenges;
- responds to pupils' diverse needs;
- overcomes potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

*Our school aims to identify and remove barriers to disabled parents and pupils in every area of school life.*

*Our school makes all pupils and parents feel welcome irrespective of race, colour, creed, gender, or impairment.*

### **Section 4 Accessibility at Rudolf Steiner School**

The school will ensure that all staff and trustees are aware of the implications of the DDA and, through training and development opportunities, embed the good practice across all aspects of school life.

DDA works are ongoing and completed in September 2016 to enable greater mobility access in to and around the school included:

- Building of a raised level ramp from the pathway in to the school car park to the central pedestrian causeway, providing safe and level access.
- Telephone intercom from external entry gates.
- All corridor doors were changed to suit wheel chair users
- Priory House 1<sup>st</sup> floor classrooms and corridor had a new door fitted with extended vision panel
- Class 3 has been moved to ground floor level and access ramp installed inside classroom for greater participation by all.

Major refurbishment of the school buildings in 2015 has resulted in:

- Classrooms with better use of floor space to enable easier movement around the room.
- New ceilings, floor and wall finishes to improve acoustic performance.
- Better conditions for the use of technology including interactive black boards.
- DDA compliant doors throughout.
- Corridors that are wide and have few obstructions.
- Efficient LED lights that give even, light without flicker.
- Controllable 'zone' lighting within classrooms.
- Girls toilets and additional Ambulant toilet.
- Induction hearing loop installed in reception

During the period of the Accessibility Plans from 2010 - 2015, we tried hard to achieve our vision and several of those successful outcomes are listed below:

- Installed disabled toilet in the Photography lab as part of refurbishment works and access ramp
  - Installed access ramp at reception and accessible door bell
  - Conversion of the Barn to allow greater flexibility for teaching and learning experience, installing access ramp and toilet facilities as part of the school's refurbishment works.
  - Install access ramp to Hut 13 sixth form common room
  - Install access ramp to Mushroom kindergarten
  - Two disabled toilets within the main school provision for extra support.
  - Educational visits using EVOLVE to ensure equal participation for disabled/impaired pupils
  - Modified transport provision to enable all pupils to attend events.
  - Risk assessments and successful adaptation of teaching to allow pupils with short-term disability to receive full entitlement to curriculum.
  - Two accessible parking space installed for disabled people (physical)
  - Large screen installed in theatre/hall with projector (visual)
  - New speakers and sound system within the theatre/hall, with wireless microphones
- At Rudolf Steiner School, we try to ensure that every child has the best opportunity to achieve. We make 'reasonable adjustments' to our practices and policies to meet the requirements of the DDA. We do recognise that there is always room to improve and the Action Plan shows our wish to continue to develop our practice.

We will use our information systems to monitor our progress as a school and the progress of disabled children within the school to ensure that we are helping all children achieve.

## **Section 5 Involvement**

Care plans are drawn up for children identified as having disabilities in consultation with specialist support services and parents. They are reviewed regularly and are made available to and discussed with all relevant members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

There is a standing item on the agenda for all school meetings related to SEND,

The views of the pupils and their parents are taken in to account when drawing up and evaluating the effectiveness of care plans.

Liaison with the specialist support and medical care services involved with individual children is a fundamental aspect of our provision. We include the recommendations of these services/agencies in all care plans for all pupils

## **Section 6 Management, Co-ordination, and Implementation**

Our SENCO monitors and implements this policy.

Our trustees reviews this policy's formation and implementation.

A record of all pupils with identified disabilities is kept confidentially and updated regularly.

The academic progress of pupils on this register is tracked using the established school systems and any outcome gaps identified.

The participation of all pupils at after school clubs is monitored closely and particular consideration is taken of the uptake of places in these clubs by disabled pupils.

We endeavour to ensure that disabled pupils participate in all educational and non-educational visits and make provision accordingly.

The monitoring and assessment of the impact of this plan and curricular provision / standards achieved by pupils under its remit are integrated into review meetings on an annual basis. Trends in data will need to be analysed as the latter is collated following the implementation of this plan.

Parents are fully informed of all provision made for their children and are involved in formal meetings.

Teachers are always accessible for informal meetings to discuss progress.

This plan is referenced in the School Handbook for Parents.