



HEATHFIELD SCHOOL

Disability Policy

Policy Area:	General
Relevant Statutory Regulations:	ISSR Part 2 and 3 NMS Standard 3, Inclusion, equality and diversity Equality Act 2010 Disability Discrimination Act 2005 SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) Children Act 2004 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 Children and Families Act 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
Key Contact Personnel in School	
Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:	Bursar
Version:	2024.01
Date updated:	01 September 2024
Date of next review:	01 September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least triennially, and/or following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

Introduction

Heathfield School (“the School”) has an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2011 (“SENDA”):

- not to treat pupils (both current and prospective) or employees who are disabled less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- to make reasonable adjustments for pupils and employees who are disabled, so they are not put at a substantial disadvantage;
- to draw up plans to show how, over time, the School will remove any physical access barriers to ensure our school is as accessible as possible for pupils, staff and visitors with disabilities.

This policy sets out the proposals of the School to increase access to education for pupils who are disabled, in the three areas required by the planning duties of the Equality Act 2010:

1. Increasing the extent to which pupils who are disabled can participate in the School curriculum.
2. Improving the environment of the School so pupils who are disabled can take greater advantage of education and associated services.
3. Improving the delivery of the curriculum to pupils who are disabled.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Accessibility Plan and Equal Opportunities Policy.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

Scope

This Policy applies to current staff and pupils (where relevant, it will also apply to prospective staff, pupils and visitors). This policy is not contractual in nature.

Definitions

Disability: The Equality Act 2010 describes a person who is disabled as having "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".

By way of further explanation:

Physical impairment may cover mobility difficulties and sensory difficulties such as hearing and visual impairment, and medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or HIV.

Mental impairment includes neurological deficits such as specific learning difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions ("ASC"), speech and language difficulties, mental health conditions, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder ("ADHD").

Substantial means "more than minor or trivial".

Long-term means a period of 12 months or longer.

A very large group of children is included within the definition of disability, including children with significant behaviour difficulties which relate to an underlying impairment (and not arising from social or domestic circumstances).

Not all pupils or staff who have a learning difficulty or special educational need are disabled.

Pupils will not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Reasonable adjustment is defined as a decision taken by the School to allow changes to be made to standard arrangements for staff and pupils in relation to their work and study at school. Some staff and pupils may become disabled during their working lives or studies and the need to make reasonable adjustments is important to allow them to continue in their employment or studies.

Reasonable adjustments will also apply to those applying to the School for employment, study or visiting.

Responsibilities and Roles

The **Governing Body** has:

- appointed a member of staff to be responsible for special educational needs and disabilities (“SENCo”);
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headmistress to ensure all School staff and stakeholders are aware of and comply with this policy;
- a duty to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (“DDA”) and with the Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice (2002);
- a duty under the DDA (as amended by the SENDA) to publish an Accessibility Plan but not to:
 - discriminate against disabled pupils in the School’s admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
 - treat disabled pupils less favourably
 - take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage;
- the responsibility to work with parents to ensure the full needs of each individual child are met as the school values parents’ knowledge of their child’s disability and its effect on their ability to carry out normal activities;
- a duty to respect the child’s and parents right to confidentiality;
- the responsibility of providing all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum which is differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils;
- responsibility for ensuring that the School complies with all equality legislation;
- the responsibility to endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum 2000 framework which underpins the development of a more inclusive curriculum by:
 - setting suitable learning challenges
 - responding to pupil’s diverse learning needs
 - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual and groups of pupils

The **Headmistress** will:

- oversee the implementation of the policy, Scheme and Accesibility Plan;
- ensure all School staff, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- report to the Governing Body on the procedures in place for School staff with disabilities;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by monitoring the:
 - physical environment of the School
 - provision of information
 - delivery of the curriculum by:
 - monitoring learning and teaching through observing lessons
 - monitoring planning and assessment
 - speaking with pupils, School staff, parents and the Governing Body

The **Bursar** will:

- in conjunction with the Governing Body devise a new plan every three years;
- annually review and adjust the Accessibility Action Plan;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- organise ongoing awareness raising and training for School staff and the Governing Body in the matter

of disability discrimination.

School staff will:

- Be required to comply with all aspects of this policy;
- liaise with the SENCo to discuss what changes are needed to the physical environment of the School, to the provision of information and to the delivery of the curriculum;
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination;
- work in partnership parents and guardians keeping them up to date with their daughter's progress and behaviour at the School.

Parents/guardians will:

- be aware of and comply with this policy;
- inform the School of their child's disability;
- share their knowledge of their child's disability and how it affects the normal activities of their child.

Admissions

The School has created over many years an ethos of educating and developing each pupil to the best of her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by other pupils, in order to create a confident, happy, well-educated and well-rounded individual. In order to maintain that ethos and the educational standards for which it is known, the School will assess all pupils for admission on the basis of its standard selection criteria from time to time.

The School's Admissions Policy aims to eliminate from the admissions process, as far as possible, any significant disadvantages which may be encountered by disabled applicants.

The School will treat every application from a disabled pupil or a pupil with a special educational need in a fair, open-minded way.

In accordance with the School's terms and conditions, parents or guardians must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties or other circumstances which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School.

The School will seek input from parents and will require a medical report or educational psychologist's report to be provided so that the School may consider what reasonable adjustments can be made.

If, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School is unable to adequately cater for the needs of those children with disabilities, the School will be unable to offer a place and parents will be informed why an offer will not be made.

If an applicant's disability becomes apparent after admission, the School will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made in order to allow the child to continue at the School. If, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School is unable to adequately cater for and meet the needs of the pupil, the Headmistress may request parents to withdraw their child. Fees in lieu will not be payable in these circumstances and the acceptance deposit will be returned.

The School's Admissions Policy can be found on the website.

Physical Access

Legislation does not require The School to remove or alter physical features but to make “reasonable adjustments” to the premises and/or curriculum to cater for a pupil’s disability.

In determining what are reasonable adjustments the School will have regard to the:

- financial resources available to the School;
- costs of any particular alteration to the premises, staffing arrangements, or special equipment required;
- practicality of making reasonable adjustments;
- extent to which aids and services will be provided via a Statement of Educational Needs, or by provision paid for outside the school’s resources;
- Health and Safety requirements;
- interests of other pupils;
- need to maintain academic, musical, sporting or other standards.

Parents and staff should be aware that the School site covers a wide area with some separate and older buildings of more than one storey without lifts (for example the classroom block, boarding areas, the Bursary). Like many senior schools, the School ‘policy’ of subject areas with designated classrooms requires pupils and staff to move around the site, necessitating the use of steps or stairs to access classrooms. Any pupil or member of staff with significantly impaired mobility will be put at a disadvantage by these problems, if not prevented altogether from access to some or all of the educational and other facilities the School offers. These matters be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments; the major alterations necessary to the physical features of the older parts of the School would be prohibited by cost. It should also be noted that the development of long-term plans also cannot entirely remedy the situation.

The Accessibility Plan shows the ways in which the Governing Body plans to make the buildings, where possible, progressively more accessible to disabled pupils, disabled parents and visitors within the constraints of local planning permission.

Reasonable Adjustments for Pupils and Staff

The School shall inform the employee, pupil and parents of the reasonable adjustments that the School is legally required to make for that individual. Reasonable adjustments may typically include:

- Making arrangements for a prospective pupil or prospective employee in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room;
- Allowing extra time for a dyslexic child to complete an entrance exam;
- Providing examination papers in larger print or different coloured paper for a pupil with a visual impairment;
- Rearranging the timetable to allow a pupil to attend or a teacher to teach a class in an accessible part of the building;
- Arranging a variety of accessible sports activities for a pupil.

The School is not legally required to make adjustments which include:

- Physical alterations such as the provision of stair-lifts or new ground floor facilities;
- Sophisticated auxiliary aids and services such as a loop for pupils with hearing aids;
- Large LCD screen computers and disability trained classroom assistants.

The Equality Act 2010 requires all schools to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils from their own resources where these are deemed to be a “reasonable adjustment” without passing the cost on to parents.

The Learning Support Department

The Learning Support department is staffed by fully qualified specialists who are able to support each pupil with a specific learning difficulty in the following areas: dyslexia, dyspraxia processing difficulties, dyscalculia.

Some disabled pupils may also require specialist support from the Learning Support department. Pupils with identified or suspected learning difficulties will be assessed at their parents' expense by a specialist so that the areas that require support can be identified. Specialist one-to-one lessons and help with study skills are available as extras outside the normal curriculum. The School works closely with the pupil and her parents to help her to overcome the barriers that her difficulties present.

Spectrum will prepare a Pupil Profile for each pupil, setting achievable targets. The pupil, together with her parents and teachers, review the plan regularly and she is encouraged to take ownership of it and to set her own targets.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

The head of Spectrum has an important role as the School's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Working closely with the Director of Studies and other pastoral staff, the SENCO plays a key role in determining the strategic development of the SEND provision in the School in order to cater for the individual needs of pupils with SEND. The SENCO will liaise closely with the pupil's teaching staff, parents and where appropriate, with the School's medical staff and with external agencies and professionals. The head of Spectrum attends regular external training in order to remain current with the latest duties as SENCO.

One of the responsibilities of the Governors' Educational, Pastoral and Compliance Subcommittee is oversight of the provision of learning support and accessibility for pupils with disabilities, SEND and learning difficulties.

English as an Additional Language

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of the School, pupils must be fluent English speakers. The School may recommend that some pupils, whose first language at home is not English, receive individual tuition in English as an additional language. These lessons are also available as extras outside the normal curriculum.

Staff Training

All relevant staff are given regular annual training by the SENCO on working with SEN and disabilities. This training focuses on helping each pupil to reach her maximum potential by, for example, making the appropriate adjustments such as large print or using coloured paper giving full access to the curriculum and facilities of the School to the greatest extent possible.

The School trains its teachers to differentiate within the curriculum and to take into account pupils' learning difficulties as well as the needs of gifted and talented pupils. The SENCO liaises with the teaching staff about the most appropriate means of meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and learning difficulties. The SENCO has an important role in ensuring consistency of approach by all teachers in providing, for example, access to learning materials that are easier to read and understand, or extra time in exams.

School Behaviour and Discipline

The School takes pride in its well-developed system of pastoral care for social interaction amongst pupils. The School recognises that disabled pupils or those with special educational needs or learning difficulties may be at risk of being bullied. All pupils are taught that victimisation and bullying is prohibited and will not be

tolerated. The School's objective is to ensure that a disabled pupil, or a pupil with SEND or other protected characteristic, does not suffer less favourable treatment as a result of discrimination. Pupils are taught through the curriculum and other activities the importance of respecting each other and behaving towards each other with courtesy and consideration.

The School has an Anti-Bullying Policy which makes it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously. The School's policies make clear the seriousness of bullying, victimisation and harassment in all its pernicious forms, including racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, gender-related, sexually orientated, homophobic, disabled and cyber, in causing serious psychological damage and even suicide. Considerable teacher time is expended in preventing bullying, victimisation and harassment and in dealing with it when it occurs.

Concerns and complaints

The School naturally hopes that a parent will not feel that they have cause to complain but the Complaints Policy is published on the School website and also available from the School office for any parent who wishes to use it. The policy starts by asking parents to raise any concern or complaint with the person in charge, then the Headmistress, then the Governing Body. Additionally, all parents of children with SEND have the legal right to seek redress from the First Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if they believe that their daughter has been discriminated against.

Recruitment of Staff with Disabilities

The School will review and develop its recruitment procedures to encourage applicants with disabilities and ensure that no unlawful discrimination takes place. Candidates with disabilities will have any additional needs met wherever possible and practicable if called for interview. All staff appointments will be made on the basis of qualifications, experience and skills of the applicant, regardless of disability. Wherever possible, the School will make such reasonable adjustments as are required to enable a successful candidate with a disability to take up the position.

Retention of Staff with Disabilities

The School will support, where possible, any employee who suffers a disability whilst at work, so that they may continue their employment. Any reasonable adjustments to the working environment will be made.

Training and Continuing Professional Development ("CPD") of Staff

Training and CPD opportunities will be available to all staff regardless of disabilities. Additional needs with regard to access, equipment and facilities will be made to ensure full participation is available.

The working environment

The School will make every effort to ensure that the environment for work does not prevent persons with disabilities from taking up or continuing in employment for which they are suitably qualified.

Parents with disabilities

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that any information sent to or made available to parents is accessible to all. Every effort is made to ensure that the environment does not prevent persons with disabilities from

visiting the School.

Disability Awareness

The School will ensure that awareness of disability is raised amongst all staff, pupil's, parents and visitors. This is to ensure that:

- those involved in recruitment and selection are thoroughly acquainted with the policy and procedures;
- all managers and colleagues of any employee with a disability have a clear understanding of the specific requirements and adjustments necessary and make a positive response;
- any member of staff, pupil, parent, member of the Governing Body or visitor with a disability is able to seek assistance, if required, to support and enable them to fully participate.

Monitoring

The School will hold a central record on the Engage system, of all staff and pupils who wish to declare a disability, so that regular monitoring of the effectiveness of this policy may take place.

Health and Safety Implications

The School has duties under the relevant legislation to ensure the health & safety and welfare at work of all staff, pupils and visitors and that its operations do not expose, staff, pupils and visitors to risks to their health and safety. As such the normal principles contained within the School's Health and Safety Policies will apply. It may be necessary, on occasion, to make special arrangements to ensure that a person's impairment, or an issue relating to it, does not create a hazard for themselves or for others.

Arrangements, for example, for the safe evacuation of persons identified as being especially at risk from fire can be found within the Fire Safety Policy. In cases where staff and pupils have disclosed disabilities that affect their mobility in an emergency, they will be consulted by a member of the health and safety committee about their individual needs for evacuating the building in a safe and dignified manner. This will be in advance of any emergency and a personal emergency evacuation plan ("PEEP") produced. Training regarding assisting staff, pupils and visitors with evacuation is provided to Fire Wardens.

Related Policies

- Accessibility Plan Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Exams Disability Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Laptop Computer and Word Processor Policy

