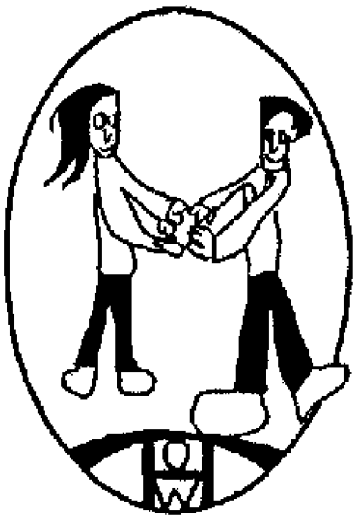
Howbridge Infant School



Disability & Equality Policy

September 2024

Introduction

Howbridge Infant School welcomes its general responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 and recognises that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

This policy sets out the steps the governing body will take that will result in improved outcomes for pupils, parents/carers and staff with a disability in all aspects of school life.

School Ethos, Vision & Values

At Howbridge Infant School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for pupils, staff and all those receiving services from the school who may have a disability. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. Our admissions policy does not discriminate against pupils with a disability. The achievement of pupils with a disability will be monitored and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. We will not tolerate harassment of people with a disability or any form of impairment.

This school uses the "social model" of disability, as the basis for its work to improve equality for, and tackle discrimination against, people with a disability. This model says that it is the world and society that creates barriers that limit or prevent people with a disability from enjoying the same opportunities as people who do not have a disability.

The school has in place an equality and diversity in employment policy, which is reviewed regularly by the governing body and outlines the statement of intent for Howbridge Infant School.

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person with a disability 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'.

According to the Equality Act:

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection

Progressive Conditions

A progressive condition is one that gets worse over time. People with progressive conditions can be classed as disabled.

However, you automatically meet the disability definition under the Equality Act 2010 from the day you're diagnosed with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.

Under the Equality Act there is a requirement for public sector bodies, including schools, to promote equality for disabled people in every aspect of their work. Schools will need to take an organisational approach to formulating policy and practices, which positively promote disability.

The specific duties require schools:

(a) To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
(b) To prepare equality objectives

How People with a Disability are Involved

Howbridge Infant School recognises the importance of involving people with disabilities fully in school life and this is done in a variety of ways:

Pupils with a Disability:

We have identified our pupils with a disability. All children, where necessary, have a Health Care Plan that is reviewed at least annually with their parents/carers. These children are highlighted to all staff via class and MDA medical folder, with appropriate action and guidance to take if required.

Staff with a Disability:

We have provided disabled parking in the staff car park. Any additional needs raised by staff will be reviewed annually and appropriate resources will be put in place.

Parents/Carers with a Disability:

Parents/carers with a disability will have access to our site. We will provide any additional resources to ensure that they can fully participate in supporting their child in school.

Any areas identified will be worked into the school action plan.

Members of the Local Community with a Disability:

Any additional needs identified by members of the local community will be reviewed and any necessary adjustments will be made.

Pupils, staff, parents and members of the community with a disability who may use school facilities will be invited to notify the school of any additional needs. Any concerns raised will be reviewed so appropriate adjustments can be made. These additional needs will be reviewed annually and any necessary additional facilities monitored through the regular review of the school action plan.

How we have Gathered Information on the Effect of our Policies and Practices on People with a Disability

We recognise that our policies and practices may impact on people with a disability and in particular on:

- the recruitment, development and retention of employees with a disability;
- on the educational opportunities available to, and the achievements of, pupils with a disability.

We acknowledge that information gathered from a wide range of sources will be required in order to identify the actions which we need to take to promote disability equality. We will ensure that information is gathered in relation to both employment and the delivery of our services. The processes we use for gathering information will include:

Pupil Achievement:

All children with additional needs, whether educational or medical, are either included on the SEN Register and/or have a Health Care Plan. These documents are regularly reviewed.

Learning Opportunities:

Close links are maintained with the Community Nursing Team (including speech therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists), who offer support and training for specific health care plans and day to day care requirements for pupils. Where necessary additional needs are included on provision maps and reviewed termly. These include strategies for supporting learning opportunities for those pupils with additional needs.

Admissions, Transitions, Exclusions:

There are several opportunities for discussing any additional needs pupils or parents/carers may have during open mornings, meetings with the school SENCo and home/school visits which take place before starting school. Children with additional needs are reviewed termly with parents and staff from the junior school or receiving school in preparation for transition, to ensure needs are planned for and resourced prior to transition.

Social Relationships:

Social relationships between pupils with and without disabilities are nurtured through specific targeted small group work, focusing on sharing social and play skills.

Employing, Promoting and Training Disabled Staff:

The school follows HR advice through our Equality and Diversity in Employment policy which is reviewed annually by the governing body.

How we will assess the Impact of our Policies

The impact of policies, procedures, functions and practices of the school on disability equality will be reviewed annually and any improvements will be implemented where necessary.

We recognise that all our school's policies may have an impact on the participation and outcomes for pupils, parents/carers, staff and members of the local community with a disability. We have agreed a programme to review the impact of policies and this is contained in our action plan.

Our Action Plan

We have produced a disability, accessibility and equality action plan to ensure that we fulfil our general and specific duties under the Equality Act.

Our existing accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to improve many areas including:

- Compliance with the Equality Act
- Access to the Physical Environment
- Access to the Curriculum
- Access to Written Information, Advice and Guidance

Our Equality Objectives: (Please also see the Equality Information and ObjectivesPolicy June 2024)

Objective 1 - To improve the attainment of and accelerate progress, by removing barriers to learning, for pupils from specific groups, e.g. PPG, SEN.

Objective 2 - To embed the importance of good attendance within the culture of the whole school community to secure equality of opportunity for pupil engagement, attainment and progress.

To be reviewed: Autumn 2025