

Title	Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan
Year	2019/2020
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Date approved by Full Governing Body	September 2019
Review Date	September 2022

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1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to ensure equality and access for all
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to equality and access for all
- Staff are fully informed of the needs of learners and related strategies to enable access and equality for all
- Opportunities are taken to maximise impact by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between disabled and non-disabled people, people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, girls and boys, women and men
- Policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:
- Policies and activities benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and encouraging all to greater participation in public life

We recognise that the commitment to education provision and facilities which promote equality and access for all is a shared community responsibility.

2. Principles

Our policy applies to all in our school community, namely learners, staff, governors, visitors and volunteers.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the *protected characteristics* that qualify for protection from discrimination as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender, including reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

In fulfilling our legal obligations we adhere to the following:

- All learners and school team members are of equal value
- We recognise and respect difference
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion
- We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- We will consult and involve widely
- Society as a whole should benefit

At Wootton Park School, we believe that all learners, their parents and carers, and school team members are of equal value. We also understand that treating people equally does not necessarily mean treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kind of harassment, barriers and disadvantages which people may face.

Our principles will promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment

We will engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.

We will consult in ways which take into account:

- views of disabled people as well as those who are non-disabled
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the differing needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity

We recognise that it is the responsibility of each of us to ensure that all elements of this policy are actively and consistently reflected in our practice. We will systematically monitor, evaluate and constantly review the impact of this policy.

3. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Equality Act 2010, which replaced existing equality legislation, including the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity.

Wootton Park School recognises the duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion and recognises that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan covers all users of the school and is set within the context of the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 2014.

4. Equality statement

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team of Wootton Park School will keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the aims and principles set out above.

Wootton Park School is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to above, including:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism, and those that are directed against travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia

We will respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, learners and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise learners' diverse circumstances. We ensure that all learners have the same opportunities, regardless of any barriers they may face.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Ensuring equality and access for all is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with statutory requirements, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

The Principal is responsible for implementing the policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination. The Principal may delegate day-to-day responsibility to a member of the SLT.

The Principal, Governing Body and staff of Wootton Park School are also committed to providing a suitable learning environment and a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to meet the needs and fulfil the potential of all learners who attend the school.

Staff will be expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver lessons and sequences of lessons reflecting the school's aims and principles
- support pupils in their class with additional needs or for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work

6. Confidentiality

Information concerning learners is shared with staff on the basis that they understand that the only purpose of confidentiality is to benefit the learner.

Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual learners and their related needs in order that they can support and plan learning and enrichment activities accordingly.

Where we have parents/carers with additional needs, relevant staff will be informed in order that appropriate arrangements can be made for them to be able to access school events.

7. Recognising need and taking action

The school actively operates an equal opportunities policy for all learners ensuring that learners with special educational needs and disabilities have full access to all areas of the curriculum, the school premises and their learning environment.

The Equality Act 2010 states that all schools require an accessibility audit and access plan in order that school premises and learning environments are assessed regularly to enable all provisions for disabled access to be put in place. The accessibility audit and action plan is reviewed annually via the governing board.

Access and Equality for Learners, Staff and Visitors:

The school has completed the following adaptations to learning provision and to the site:

- Use of ICT and assistive technology for assessments and examinations to increase levels of independence for learners
- Provision of specialist equipment in subjects to meet specific student needs
- School trips are planned on the basis that all students are included and can access all activities – external advice is sought as necessary to meet individual needs and risk assessments are completed as appropriate
- Provision of an interpreter for parents' evenings to aid communication for families with specific needs
- Installation of three disabled access toilets on the school site – with one containing shower facilities
- All disabled toilet sinks have been equipped with 'paddle' taps for ease of use
- Installing carpeting and blinds into the majority of classrooms
- Providing accessible parking spaces in the main car park and in the Learner Drop-off car park
- Installing a lift to access classrooms on the first floor of both buildings
- Installing ramps to all ground floor entrances where there is a change in height
- Purchase of adjustable tables for use in science

In addition, staff training has been offered in relation to meeting the needs of learners with epilepsy and diabetes in order that a greater number of staff have knowledge of these specific medical conditions and can support these learners effectively.

Wootton Park School recognises that learners may have a range of different needs and this guidance should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy, the SEND Information Report, EAL Policy and Dyslexia Policy. Wootton Park School ensures that learners with physical disabilities are treated on equal terms with their peers and follows the principles of the Equality Act 2010 to implement all reasonable adjustments to ensure that the same opportunities are available to these learners as their peers.

8. Complaints and concerns around equality and accessibility practices

For any complaints related to equality or accessibility, the schools Complaints Policy will be followed.

9. Safer Recruitment

The School will have regard for '*Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018), Part three: Safer recruitment*' and ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the school, who is likely to be perceived by a learner as a safe and trustworthy adult including temporary staff, volunteers, Governors and Directors and staff employed by contractors.

We recognise our duties under safeguarding legislation and aim to comply with both the Health Standards (England) Regulations 2003 and Section 60 of the Equality Act 2010.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 applies to all those working at Wootton Park School in whatever capacity and includes those who are working under a contract. The school adopts the Local Authority policy of guaranteeing an interview to job applicants with a disability, who meet the essential criteria.

Governors will, wherever possible, make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment. All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

To comply with safer recruitment practice all applicants will follow our safer recruitment procedures and successful candidates are subject to pre-employment checks and DBS checks procedures as outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Training

All staff, including support and administrative staff, will receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

The principles outlined in relation to fair and equal treatment will also apply to selection for training.

Requests for training will be considered in accordance with Wootton Park School's operational priorities, based on the school development plan and CPD budget.

11. Links with other policies

Wootton Park School recognises that learners and staff may have a range of different needs. This policy is one of a series in the school's portfolio.

Other policies related to equality and accessibility include:

- staff code of conduct;
- special educational needs and disabilities policy;
- SEND information report;
- EAL policy;
- health and safety policy;
- dyslexia policy;
- supporting learners with medical needs policy;
- anti-bullying policy;
- complaints policy and procedures.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the SENCo. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

The Equality and Accessibility Action Plan details further planned improvements in order that we continue to develop our provision and environment to meet the duties of the Equality Act 2010. This is reviewed every two years by the SENCo. At every review it will be approved by the full governing board.

13. Equality and Accessibility Action Plan

The Governing Body has three key duties towards disabled learners:

- not to treat disabled learners less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- to plan to increase access to education for disabled learners

This plan sets out the proposals of the Wootton Park School to increase access to education for disabled learners in three key areas:

- increasing the extent to which disabled learners can participate in the school curriculum
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled learners can take advantage of education and associated services
- improving the delivery to disabled learners of information, which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually. Attached is our action plan showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan of individual disabled learners.

Main Priorities:

1. Increasing the extent to which disabled learners can participate in the school curriculum:

- ICT rooms to include availability of specialist equipment, such as anti-glare screen overlays and mouse magnifiers, for learners to use as required
- Learners and staff to receive training on how to manipulate ICT to meet individual needs
- External specialists to provide guidance on appropriate resources and strategies for delivering an inclusive PE curriculum – bi-annual visits to review progress
- Resources such as writing ramps and specialist stationery to be available for learner use as required
- Staff training to ensure that all school activities and learning tasks are accessible to all learners
- LDD intervention programme to include support to develop co-ordination and motor skills
- Staff training in disability awareness to reflect the diverse needs of learners within the school and anticipatory duties

2. Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled learners can take advantage of education and associated services:

- Ensure all classrooms and resources are organised in accordance with learner need
- Facilities on new site to meet disabled access requirements and include electronic doors where possible to enable independent access for learners with mobility needs
- Learner fingerprint scan and payment machines to be placed at differing heights to enable all to access independently
- Main Reception area to have low level writing surface for disabled users
- All toilets to be fitted with 'paddle' taps for ease of use for all, including those with motor skill/physical needs
- Installing carpeting, blinds and acoustic ceiling tiles into classrooms, where appropriate and in line with health and safety guidelines

3. Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for learners who are not disabled:

- Ongoing programme of staff training to reflect diverse needs of learners within the school and enable appropriate differentiation – wider use of alternative visual, auditory, ICT methods to be explored

Management, co-ordination, implementation and review of the Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan:

The co-ordination and implementation of the Accessibility Plan is managed by the Principal, in liaison with the School Governing Body, Senior Leadership Team, SENCo, Site Team, Curriculum Leaders and relevant external agencies. The Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan is reviewed annually, but can be reviewed at any point in accordance with the needs of our stakeholders or changes to legislation.

Availability of the Accessibility Plan:

The Accessibility Plan is available to view on the Wootton Park School website. A paper copy can be requested by contacting the school Reception on 01604 931139 or emailing info@woottonparkschool.org.uk