



Queensmill School

Policy for Disability Equality Scheme

This policy, alongside our School Development and Accessibility Plan constitutes our Disability Equality Scheme.

The SEN and Disability Act 01 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 95 (DDA) to include schools, requiring them to:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage
- To draw up plans to show how, over time, they will increase access to education to disabled pupils in a School Accessibility Plan. NB: In this school our accessibility plan is contained in our School Development Plan.

DDA duties:

Applies to schools in three main functions:

1. in providing education to our children
2. as an employer
3. as a provider of services to parents/carers of our pupils and the wider community

It is unlawful to discriminate against disabled pupils. School discriminates if:

- It treats a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably than others 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.
- Over time, schools should plan to increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils
- Make improvements to the physical environment to increase access to education and other services
- Make written information accessible in a range of ways for disabled pupils where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

Definition of disability:

"Someone with 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."

Our duties as an employer:

We continue to be committed to the borough's policy on equal opportunities, more detail of which can be found in our Equality Policy.

Our education for our pupils and the service we provide to our families and the wider community:

At Queensmill School all of our children are "disabled" under the above definition. We therefore need to make less adjustment to the curriculum as other schools might, as everything we do in Queensmill is aimed at allowing our pupils, all of whom have Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD), to understand the work being presented to them and to be able to make progress in it.

Our written materials for our children are all written in English and in symbols to allow access to visual learners who can read Makaton but cannot yet read English. Our materials are all presented in small chunks so as not to confuse. They are all related to the child's experiences, skills and understanding. Because of favourable staff:pupil ratio in a special school like ours, we can individually tailor the curriculum to meet the learning and emotional needs of every child in our school.

We use the following strategies to keep anxiety and arousal as low as possible so that our children are able to feel relaxed and are able to learn:

TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Children with Autism and other Communication Handicaps)

PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) + ProLoQuo2Go

SIAs (Sensory Integration Approaches)

SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support)

Intensive Interaction

Social Stories

Pen portraits

A therapeutic music approach.

All Schemes of Work show differentiation of the National Curriculum so that it is accessible to learners with ASD, who prefer visual ways of learning and are generally learning at levels below age-related expectations. Motivating materials, equipment and toys are used to support this curriculum, incorporating learning at P Levels (Pre-National Curriculum Level 1) and using sensory input as much as possible. Presentation of the curriculum incorporates advice from SaLT and OT, and equipment that they recommend. We use a wide range of ICT including interactive whiteboards in all rooms and interactive rooms and spaces. Assessment procedures allow us to measure children's progress in all subjects as well as in the diad of impairments. The school places a very high priority on staff training so that all staff are confident in working with our pupils, all of whom have severe and complex ASDs.

All activities in the school, curricular or extra-curricular, are available to all children in the school, no matter how significant their special educational needs. We achieve this by making reasonable adjustments and providing as many staff as are necessary to allow our children to safely take part in these activities.

We also follow these statutory procedures in order to keep our children safe and happy and able to learn:

1. CP procedures
2. Logging all incidents of Physical Intervention and making parents/carers aware
3. Writing Behaviour Plans for all children who have required PI
4. Sending to the borough all accident/incident forms
5. Sending to the any racist incident forms
6. Risk assessments

We have discussed all of the critical policies as a whole staff (Mission Statement, Aims, Professional Standards, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Equal Opportunities and Race Relations, Behaviour, SEN, Anti-Bullying, Health and Safety policies, etc) so that all staff have been involved and are aware of the expectations on them. All other policies have been circulated to staff for their comments, and those comments incorporated into the draft policies before they have gone to governors for ratification.

We encourage our staff to include frequent trips into the community so that our pupils are able to generalise skills learned in the class to the outside world, and so that the local community is aware of our children and their needs. The senior managers of the school also regard it as a part of the responsibility of the school to make the wider world aware of us and of autism. For this reason we like to engage with the local press and wider, and with research projects with London and Cambridge Universities.

Each of our pupils has a statement of SEN which is being converted to an Education, Health and Care Plan over a period of time, and a diagnosis of ASD with associated learning difficulties. They may also have some challenging behaviours. We make reasonable adjustments for them all. Our pupils are:

1. all treated favourably compared with each other
2. not placed at a substantial disadvantage in access to our curriculum
3. able to access the curriculum through PECS, ProLoQuo2Go, physical prompts, visual prompts, signing.
4. treated with respect (see our Mission Statement and Professional Standards) and dignity (see our Intimate Care policy)

At Queensmill School we have an inclusive ethos and will work together to find a way to reduce children's anxieties, reduce their challenging behaviours, and help them to feel relaxed, happy and to make progress. We also watch children's social, emotional and academic progress so that we can, in collaboration with parents/carers, assess when they might be ready for integration opportunities or inclusion into a mainstream school. We therefore have a "can-do" approach where staff will identify any barriers to learning and try to find solutions. We make reasonable adjustments to staffing in order to achieve this.

All staff are routinely trained in:

1. Autism: theory and practice
2. TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Children with Autism and other Communication Handicaps)
3. PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
4. Use of ProLoQuo2Go and other electronic communication aids and systems
5. Sign-Along training (we have two in-house trainers)
6. Team Teach (physical restraint training)
7. Behaviour
8. Child Protection
9. Sensory Integration Approaches
10. SCERTS: Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support.
11. SoSafe!

We work very closely with parents/carers and, along with the SaLT team and OT, will help them to find solutions to home-based problems, often sleep or food related, or related to sharing, or perhaps even preparing a child for a forthcoming visit to the dentist or the hairdresser.

We plan an exciting and motivating curriculum so that children are keen to participate and learn. We place the teaching and learning of communication at the very top of our priorities, so that we are constantly trying to help children to make progress in being able to tell us their needs and wants. We recognise the positive effect that this will have on behaviour, but we also use functional analysis of behaviour to assess what it is that the child is trying to communicate or achieve by a

certain type of behaviour and how we can give them an easy and acceptable way of telling us what it is that they want.

Whilst teaching many skills individually, we encourage children to work in groups to improve their tolerance of being with others, their turn taking and sharing, their interpersonal and social skills. This carries on throughout the day, in classes, the playtimes, lunchtimes, trips out of school, etc.

We have an extensive library of books, videos and DVDs about autism. The Headteacher writes a synopsis of each one, and sends the list to all staff and parents/carers at the beginning of each term so that they can borrow these resources. They include some books about people with Aspergers who have achieved great things in life, which can be used for those of our children who can understand them. They also include books written for siblings of children with ASD in order to support them. One of our parents is organising a network group for siblings at the school, so that they can discuss with each other the difficulties they experience and receive support and advice.

Some of our children need medication and regular medical procedures. We receive training from our local NHS Trust in administrations of rectal diazepam. Staff administer over the counter or prescription drugs if authorised to do so by parents/carers, supported by our school nurse who visits one half day per week.

We have a School Development Plan that includes our Accessibility Plan that shows:

- *increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils* (therefore, in Queensmill, for all of our pupils, and in the context of the mainstream schools being supported by our Outreach Service, their children with ASD)
- *improvements to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services at the school* (our new school buildings and site, and another minibus)
- *improvements to the provision of information for disabled pupils where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled* (since all of our pupils fall under the definition of disabled, we provide work and information for them all at a level that they can understand. We also acknowledge how important it is for our parents/carers to have information in a form that they can access so that they can work in partnership with us, and to achieve this we provide translation from our own staff where possible, translation services available from private companies if the cost is considered necessary to make a reasonable adjustment, and all of our major documents – School Profile, NAS inspection report, etc, are provided in summary form with lots of photographs of the children at work and play.

We therefore feel that in everything we do, described above, we promote equality of opportunity for youngsters with autism and others, and always promote positive attitudes towards people with autism and other disabilities. We take steps to meet the needs of all of the youngsters in our school and to encourage their participation in the wider community.

Summer 2015

Policy reviewed – January 2021

Reviewed by *F Adu*

Date for next review – January 2022