



CHANDLERS RIDGE
ACADEMY

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

2024 - 2027

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Introduction

The philosophy of Chandlers Ridge Academy is based on inclusive principles which strive to promote equality. Equality of opportunity at the Academy is about providing equal access and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community - pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members and will be practised by all staff.

- Discrimination on the basis of colour, origin, sex or physical ability is unacceptable in this school.
- The primary objective of our Academy will therefore be to educate, develop and prepare all our pupils, whatever their sex, colour, culture, origin or physical ability for life.
- Pupils and teachers will endeavour to further this objective by contributing towards a happy and caring environment and by showing respect for, and appreciation of; each other as individuals.
- The Academy acknowledges the complexity of society, and recognises that it would be failing the pupils if it did not prepare them for their integral part in society.

Our task is to equip pupils with awareness of an increasingly diverse society and of presenting the world to them as it is, and as we would like it to be. With such guidance pupils will develop their own attitudes to a pluralistic society. Past school experience shows that pupils of all backgrounds exhibit a strong desire to be part of society, as it exists in our community.

Scope of Policy

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Responsibilities

1. Spark Education Trust has overall responsibility to ensure that policies and procedures are in place for the processes associated with the Chandlers Ridge Academy.
2. LGC: The Local Governing Committee has responsibility to ensure that Chandlers Ridge Academy operates within the policies and procedures set out by Spark Education Trust.
3. Head Teacher: The Head Teacher has responsibility to ensure that operational services are suitably established within the policy and procedural framework set out by Spark Education Trust, and to ensure that all staff and volunteers understand and comply with the policy and procedural framework.
4. Senior Leadership Team: Each Senior Leader is responsible for ensuring that the policies

and procedures are adhered to within their area of accountability.

5. Teachers: Each Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the policies and procedures are adhered to within their area of accountability.
6. All Staff and volunteer helpers: All staff and volunteer helpers within the scope of the policies and procedures are responsible for the implementation of the policy within their own area of accountability.

Key Themes

Disability Discrimination Act

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

1. Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
2. To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
3. To draw up plans to show how, over time, they will increase access to education for disabled pupils (school accessibility plans).

This Plan sets out the proposals of the Governance Committee of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- The physical environment of the school
- The extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- The delivery of information to pupils and parents.

Disability Equality Duty

In addition, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a general duty on schools, which need to have due regard for the following when carrying out their functions:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA;
- Eliminating harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

This is also known as the Disability Equality Duty which is owed to all disabled pupils, staff and those using services provided by schools.

The production of this Disability Equality Scheme provides us with a framework for integrating disability equality into all aspects of school life and demonstrates how we are seeking to meet the specific duty i.e. to produce a Disability Equality Scheme for our school.

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 child's ability to memorise, concentrate, learn, speak and 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

'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.

Disability Equality Duty

The changes to the DDA 1995 brought about by the DDA 2005 have brought about a change in focus from a reactive to a proactive attitude to disability. The Disability Equality Duty includes both general and specific duties. The DRC again provides Codes of Practice for public authorities and schools must have 'due regard' to the Codes.

Due Regard

"Due regard" comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. In all their decisions and functions schools should give due weight to the need to promote disability equality in proportion to its relevance. This requires more than simply giving consideration to disability equality.

Disability equality will be more relevant to some functions than others. Schools will need to take care when assessing relevance, as many areas of their functioning are likely to be of relevance to disabled people.

Proportionality requires greater consideration to be given to disability equality in relation to functions or policies that have the most effect on disabled people. Where changing a function or proposed policy would lead to significant benefits to disabled people, the need for such a change will carry added weight when balanced against other considerations.

It will not always be possible for authorities to adopt the course of action which will best promote disability equality but schools must ensure that they have due regard to the requirement to promote disability equality alongside other competing requirements.

The General Duty

The general duty requires schools to consider the six issues listed in the Introduction in all actions which they take. The key task is to consider the promotion of disability equality and making sure it is, over time, mainstreamed into all school functions. This includes activities inside and out of the classroom as well as all other aspects of school life e.g. extended schools, school lettings, employment etc.

The general duty requires schools not only to have due regard to disability equality when making decisions about the future. They will also need to take action to tackle the consequences of

decisions in the past which failed to give due regard to disability equality. This is best approached by working towards closing the gaps in outcomes.

The general duty will build on existing responsibilities under disability legislation in relation to schools, including the duties to make reasonable adjustments, and to plan strategically to increase access to schools over time. Schools can implement the general duty by actively reviewing all their policies, procedures and planned access improvements to remove barriers with a view to greater recruitment and retention of disabled staff; and greater participation of disabled pupils, disabled parents and disabled people in all aspects of school life, in the wider community and in the non-educational services they might provide.

Schools will use the framework of the specific duties to structure their information gathering and action planning in relation to the duty. Involving disabled people and where appropriate both disabled parents and parents of disabled children in setting the school development plans and conducting the daily running of the school is likely to be necessary for the general duty to be effectively met.

The Specific Duty

The specific duty regulations require authorities, including schools, to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme, to implement certain aspects of the Scheme and to report on it.

Accessibility at Chandlers Ridge Academy

Chandlers Ridge Academy governors and staff will have regard to the "Code of Practice for Schools" issued by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) concerning the DDA. The Academy will also follow the guidance issued by the DfES in 2006 entitled "Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early years settings."

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

Building work has had a considerable beneficial effect on accessibility for disabled people at our school. The Action Plan gives details of further improvements to physical accessibility and access to the curriculum. The school will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishment of the site and premises.

Successful outcomes

During the period of the first Accessibility Plan our School tried hard to achieve its vision and

a number of the successful outcomes are listed below:

- Improved circulation in and outside the building.
- Managed access to the Hall, Main Entrance and Nursery Entrance.
- Hearing Loop fitted within the Main Entrance.
- Improved External Lighting.
- New external doors, which make access easier.
- A path suitable for wheelchairs leading from the school gate to the playgrounds.
- Improved colour schemes.
- The provision of toilet facilities for the disabled.
- A wide corridor leading through the Infant building and from the Main Entrance into the original building.
- Acoustics improvements in classrooms (by fitting wall screens and carpets).

At Chandlers Ridge Academy 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.

On 'access to the curriculum,' we have incorporated inclusive developments through national strategies, through local initiatives and through in-school developments. Learning walks include aspects of inclusion in teaching and learning. Scheme of Work revisions include measures to ensure that all pupils including those with disabilities can access the curriculum.

This is a rolling programme of improvements which is leading to holistic embedding of the principles.

In terms of the 'physical environment,' we have done what we are able to do within the resources available. The last audit in our school identified a range of issues with differing levels of importance. We have a desire to improve the environment in a way that promotes inclusion for all pupils and will continue to do so subject to resources being available.

In terms of 'information,' we have tried to use a range of formats to meet differing needs. Visual signs are used in appropriate places for all pupils, and particularly for those who need visual cues to help them. We are aware of services to produce alternative formats if necessary.

Implementation

Chandlers Ridge Academy Local Committee, Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Teachers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is effectively implemented.

Appendix 1: Chandlers Ridge Action Plan

Area	Aims	Development	Resources	Target Date	Monitoring
The Physical environment	To make planned improvement to the physical accessibility of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor wheelchair access throughout the building • Ensure all entrances ramps and corridors are kept clear for access • Ensure designated access in the car park • Classroom environment clearly organised to facilitate access • Maintenance of colour schemes to benefit children with visual impairment • Children with hearing problems situated in acoustically suitable classrooms with carpets • Hearing induction loops to be provided for children when necessary • Unobstructed vision through internal windows and door panels 	Annual R&M Budget	Ongoing When needed	Caretaker Headteacher Class teachers SENDCO
The delivery of information to pupils and parents	To improve provision of information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that written materials are in a format suitable for all disabled children or parents, meeting needs as required. 		As required	SENDCO with Secretary
Participation in the curriculum	To increase the extent to which disabled pupils can access the school curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respond to diversity in learning needs. • Secure differentiation in planning of work regarding pace, style and content. • Classroom environment to be clearly labelled and organised • Curriculum policies to account for inclusion. • SENCO to examine provision of enhanced pastoral support for specific pupils when required. • To further develop staff competencies. • To provide refresher training for the staff whenever a child's disability is identified, e.g. Epilepsy, Diabetes and allergies. • Discussion and training for staff as necessary (including classroom assistants) about curricular access, 		Ongoing	Class Teachers Subject Leaders SENDCO Headteacher