

**Disability Equality  
Scheme  
(2007-2010)**

## **Introduction**

The Governing Body of Coombe Boys' School, as required by the duties under Part 5A of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), upholds its duty to promote equality of opportunity for all people with disabilities (students, staff, parents/carers and other people who use the school or may wish to) as detailed in this scheme and attached action plan. The scheme incorporates the school's accessibility plan.

## **Rationale**

The Governing Body aims to continue to increase access to education for disabled students in three ways:

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

DDA, Part 4 (2005)

Coombe Boys' School recognises that 'being a disability friendly workplace and having a diverse workforce brings wider benefits to the school in terms of:

- a wider field for recruitment;
- retaining the experience and skills of employees who become disabled during their working life and avoiding the costs of recruiting and training new people;
- developing in-house expertise about what staff and/or students with disabilities require;
- providing role models for all;
- bringing different life experiences and new skills to the school and
- helping foster good relations with all employees by showing that everyone is valued and treated fairly.'

Adapted from Disability Rights Commission (2006)

### **1.1 The purpose and direction of the school's scheme: vision and values**

In all areas of its work, Coombe Boys' School has due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled students, staff, parents/carers, school users and other members of the school's community;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other school users that is related to their disability;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other school users;
- encourage participation by disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other school users in school life;
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other school users, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

The school is committed to the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement by setting suitable learning challenges, responding to students' diverse needs and working to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students. It endeavours to remove any barriers to access in all areas of the life of the school, is committed to ensuring equal opportunities in all aspects and to make all students feel welcome irrespective of race, colour, creed or impairment.

## **1.2 Involvement of disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other users**

The school has spoken with stakeholders who have disabilities to hear a range of views on the barriers faced by disabled staff, pupils, parents / carers when at CBS. These views have been used to identify priorities in the CBS Access Plan.

Individual staff and pupils are also provided with the opportunities to discuss their needs and to identify ways in which they can be supported.

## **1.3 Information gathering**

The school has information on disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other users in order to support the Governing Body and the school's leadership in:

- making decisions about what actions would best improve opportunities and outcomes for all disabled stakeholders;
- reviewing the school's and individual students' performance;
- enabling the school to measure its delivery on disability equality;
- assessing the impact of changes that have been made and
- identifying future priorities.

The information gathering process is handled sensitively and is conducted, as appropriate, via questionnaires which include information on the definition of disability (Appendix 1), explanation of why the information is useful, adherence to confidentiality and 'freedom to disclose' procedures and examples of positive adjustments that have already been made.

All job applicants are required to complete an equal opportunities section on the school job application forms. The school reports to the Local Authority on numbers of disabled applicants for vacancies on an annual basis. The Access to Work scheme (Appendix 2) supports disabled employees, as appropriate.

## **1.4 Impact assessment**

The impact of the Disability Equality Scheme and resulting action plan is monitored on an annual basis by the Governors Personnel Sub-Committee. The monitoring takes account of the issues identified by the consultation of people with disabilities and the analysis of the information held by the school. The school's leadership team promotes a proactive and ongoing approach to assessing the impact of disability equality in all areas of school life. All school policies and procedures are assessed for impact on disability equality at the outset and at the review stage and reasonable adjustments made accordingly.

## **2. Main priorities**

The priorities which form the basis of the action plan have been set in the light of:

- examination of the information that the school has gathered;
- the consultation with disabled students, staff and parents/carers who have been involved in the development of the scheme and
- assessment of the impact of current policies on disability equality.

### **2.1 Promoting equality of opportunity**

Coombe Boys' School works proactively to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other users of the school to promote equality of opportunity and secure participation in every aspect of school life, as appropriate.

### **2.2 Eliminating discrimination**

The school actively seeks to eliminate discrimination by awareness raising and staff training, monitoring the impact of policies, reviewing and adjusting them accordingly, raising expectations and improving liaison with stakeholders with disabilities. ( Appendix 3 )

### **2.3 Eliminating harassment**

Action is taken to:

- raise awareness amongst staff and students of disability-related harassment;
- understand the nature and prevalence of bullying and harassment;
- involve students themselves in combating bullying and
- ensure that disability-related harassment of disabled staff, parents/carers and other users of the school is identified and addressed.

### **2.4 Promoting positive attitudes**

Positive attitudes to disability are promoted by staff modelling respectful attitudes to disabled students, staff and parents, ensuring representation of disabled people in senior positions in the school, reflecting disability issues in the curriculum and using positive images in school resources, as appropriate.

### **2.5 Encouraging participation in school life**

It is fully recognised that disabled students, staff, parents/carers are encouraged to participate where they see their peers included and succeeding in the life of the school. Disabled students, staff and parents are represented in senior, responsible and representative roles to ensure that there are positive images of people with disabilities participating in school life.

### **2.6 Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment**

Action will be taken as appropriate to ensure that all procedures and policies are approached in a reasonable way. This could include additional support for disabled students, staff or parents. Special facilities for disabled students at break and lunchtimes are available if required.

### **3. Making it happen**

#### **3.1 Implementation**

The scheme and action plan are reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body. The effectiveness of the scheme is evaluated in discussions with the school improvement partner and Ofsted when the school is inspected.

#### **3.2 Publication**

The scheme is published as a separate document in the school policies section on the school u drive. A copy is available on request and can be viewed on the school's website. Parents are informed of its availability in the half-termly newsletter.

#### **3.3 Reporting**

The school's leadership team will report annually on the progress and the effect of the DES action plan to the Governing Body with reference to the information gathered at the outset. A copy of the report will be included in the school's prospectus.

#### **3.4 Reviewing and revising the scheme**

The annual review of the scheme will include:

- revisiting the information that was used to identify the priorities for the scheme and
- re-examining the information to see if actions that the school has taken have affected opportunities and outcomes for disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other users.

The review will inform the revision of the scheme, how the new priorities are set and the new action plan. This process will involve disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other users and be based on information that has been gathered by the school.

**To be reviewed April 2010**

## **Appendix 1**

### **The definition of disability**

The DDA defines a person with disabilities 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’.

Definition of the terms:

- ‘physical impairment’ includes sensory impairments;
- ‘mental impairment’ includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness;
- ‘substantial’ means ‘more than minor or trivial’; and
- ‘long-term’ is defined as 12 months or more.

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term, as defined above.

The effect on normal day-to-day activities is on 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.

Some people are automatically covered by the definition: those with cancer, multiple sclerosis, HIV infection or a severe disfigurement. There are special provisions for people with progressive or recurring conditions.

For children and young people in schools, there is a significant overlap between those who count as disabled under the DDA and those who have special educational needs as defined by the Education Act 1996. The definition of SEN includes many, but not necessarily all, disabled children: a disabled child has special educational needs if they have a disability and need special educational provision to be made for them in order to be able to access the education which is available locally.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Access to Work**

Access to Work is a scheme which is designed to help employers and disabled employees, or potential employees, find solutions to practical obstacles that prevent disabled people making the most of employment opportunities.

There are several ways in which Access to Work can help. For example, it can help pay for:

- communication support, for a deaf or hearing impaired person who may need support at an interview;
- a reader at work, for a blind or visually impaired person;
- special equipment (or alterations to existing equipment) to suit particular work needs arising from a disability; and
- help with the additional costs of travel to work for people who are unable to use public transport.

Access to Work can also pay for a support worker, if a disabled person needs practical help either at work or getting to work. The type of support on offer might include:

- someone to read to a person with a visual impairment;
- someone to support communication for a person with a hearing impairment; or
- a specialist coach for a person with learning difficulties.

Access to Work does not replace the normal responsibilities of the employer to implement Health and Safety regulations or replace the responsibilities required by the Disability Discrimination Act.

An employer or a disabled employee or potential employee can find out more by:

- contacting their local Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) through their nearest Jobcentre Plus Office. The DEA will put you in touch with an Access to Work Adviser who will discuss your particular circumstances with you;
- looking on the Jobcentre Plus website: [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

## **Appendix 3**

### **Definition of Discrimination**

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect and also includes victimisation and harassment. All are unlawful under the DDA.

While the DDA provides protection against discrimination for disabled people, it does not prohibit discrimination on grounds of disability. Unlike race and sex equality legislation, the DDA allows, under exceptional circumstances what it calls 'justified discrimination'. The Act states that discriminatory treatment '*...is justified if, but only if, the reason for it is both material to the circumstances of the particular case and substantial.*'

**Direct discrimination** means treating or proposing to treat another person less favourably on the basis of an attribute that the person possesses or is thought to possess. For example, a staff member is not interviewed because it is assumed they will be unable to do the job because they are disabled.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when a rule, practice, policy or process appears to be neutral, but in effect has a disproportionate impact on a particular group. It arises with practices that are fair in form and intention but discriminatory in impact and outcome. Indirect discrimination is unlawful when the rule, practice or policy is not reasonable in the circumstances. For example, short-listed applicants for a job are all invited to attend an interview that is held on the third floor of a building with no lifts. Applicants with a disability that affects their ability to use stairs would be disproportionately affected. This situation may give rise to indirect discrimination.

**Victimisation** occurs when someone is discriminated against because they have been involved in bringing proceedings under discrimination legislation, alleging that discrimination has occurred or for supporting such action by another.

**Harassment** occurs when, for a reason which relates to a person's race, age, sex, disability, religion or sexual orientation, another person engages in unwanted conduct which may violate the person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.