

DISABILITY ACCESS STATEMENT – For Three Years Spring 2017

Introduction

White House Academy is committed to a fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of disablement. We will welcome applications from people with disabilities to join the Academy community as students and employees.

Aim

The aims of this statement are to ensure that:

- applications for admission from all potential students are considered in line with the published admission arrangements;
- applications for employment are considered and assessed on the basis of the applicants' aptitudes, abilities and qualifications;
- disabled employees and students have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of the Academy;
- the views of individual students or employees are taken into account at all times when their requirements are being assessed;
- all students are fully integrated into the Academy and individual needs are assessed and supported as far as is practicable within a mainstream educational establishment;
- employees working with disabled people, either as colleagues or as students, have appropriate information, support and training;
- the Academy takes steps to enable employees and students who become disabled during their time at the Academy to continue in their chosen career or course of study as far as is practicable;
- disabled members of the public can fully participate in public events held within the Academy;
- so far as is reasonably practicable, the Academy premises are accessible and safe for disabled people; and no disabled student or employee is treated less favourably as a result of their disability.

Underpinning all we do is a belief that every moment a child is in school must be used effectively — if time is wasted, it is lost forever and cannot be given back. All our structures and policies are designed to maximise the learning potential of the time our children spend in school. The aim is to encompass a culture of a disability friendly school.

Operation

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) will be responsible for ensuring that employees and parents/guardians are made aware of this policy and that the Disability Code of Practice set out below is followed. (Throughout this policy, the term “parents/guardians” means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)

The Headteacher and the Board of Governors will have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy statement is implemented. The duty of care is to ensure that no discrimination takes place. This can take place in two ways:

- treating a pupil less favourably for a reason relating to its disability;
- failing to make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

This policy is underpinned by the following Acts:

- Equality Act 2010 Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Medical Policy 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

Under these policies, schools must ensure that arrangements and modifications are made in order to provide equality of opportunity for those pupils with disabilities.

Within the school policies, this policy should be read in conjunction with:

- SEND Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

A person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if he or she has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

- the person must have an impairment that is either physical or mental;
- the impairment must have adverse effects which are substantial;
- the substantial adverse effects must be long-term and;
- the long-term substantial adverse effects must be effects on normal day-to-day activities.

A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can be:

- sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing;
- impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, myalgic encephalitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), fibromyalgia, depression and epilepsy;
- progressive, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, and forms of dementia;
- auto-immune conditions such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE);
- organ specific, including respiratory conditions, such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, including thrombosis, stroke and heart disease;
- developmental, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia and dyspraxia;
- learning disabilities;
- mental health conditions with symptoms such as anxiety, low mood, panic attacks, phobias, or unshared perceptions; eating disorders; bipolar affective disorders; obsessive compulsive disorders; personality disorders; post-traumatic stress disorder, and some self-harming behaviour;
- mental illnesses, such as depression and schizophrenia;
- produced by injury to the body, including to the brain.

Disability Code of Practice

Environment

Any future building projects will be considered at the planning stage for accessibility and usability by people with disabilities.

Evacuation procedures and escape routes for students and employees with disabilities will be carefully planned and published.

Children

Applications will be considered in line with the published admission arrangements for all students. An applicant's disability will not prevent him/her from being offered a place and integrated into The Academy unless:

- the content, structure and delivery of the curriculum are such that the student would be prevented from fulfilling a major part of it; or
- The Academy would be unable to provide suitably trained employees or facilities to allow the requirements of the National Curriculum to be met.

The Academy will aim to provide students with a disability with the appropriate support to enable them to be fully integrated. The Academy will not treat a student with a disability less favourably than any other student and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the full participation and integration of disabled students. This will include working with suitable Outside Agencies to provide the necessary support: for example, Hearing Impairment specialists, Occupational Therapists etc. This could also include the use of ICT equipment.

As far as resources allow, the needs of disabled students will be taken into account in the design, structure and flexibility of teaching methods and delivery. Where a curriculum area is organised in such a way that a disabled student cannot fully participate, alternative provision will be made.

Students with a disability or who become disabled whilst studying at The Academy will be given appropriate support from employees to enable them to have equal access to the curriculum. Individual needs will be considered and addressed by all curriculum areas in collaboration with the SENCo and a personalised support plan drawn up on an annual basis. This will include access to the wider curriculum enabling students to attend events and participate in extracurricular clubs or performances.

White House Academy recognises that special arrangements may be required to enable students with disabilities, including specific learning difficulties, to exhibit their capabilities and knowledge. Special arrangements will be made to enable such students to perform to the best of their ability by meeting their individual needs. The Academy will liaise with the relevant Examination Boards in such instances. Students and parents/guardians will be made fully aware of the process for making special arrangements for assessment and examinations by the SENCo.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board of Governors and Headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of White House Academy's Disability Access Statement at specified intervals.

Arrangements for the next three years

- The views of individual students, parents, employees, governors and trustees will be taken into account at all times when their requirements are being assessed.
- The views of the Health and Safety Officer will be taken into account at all times when their requirements are being assessed.
- We will review our pupil intake to assess any needs that may arise.

Increase the extent in which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

We aim to make our children's learning experiences varied and inclusive; raising standards, particularly in English and Mathematics, remains our main objective. Although we place particular emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills, we also have great provision for sport and the performing arts.

Existing provision at White House Academy

The curriculum is planned with the children's experiences and knowledge at the forefront and then built on from there. Additional provision is available for those children who have difficulties in accessing the curriculum or who have needs within behaviour for learning and ensuring they are focused on their learning. Special Educational Needs are assessed as soon as possible and then the

necessary provision is implemented either solely by the school or with the intervention of a specialist outside agency. The assessment cycle also ensures that children's progress is monitored and reviewed to check the provision is continuing to meet their needs.

As far as possible, all physical activities, whether within the school curriculum or extra-curricular, offer equal access to disabled pupils. This may be through modification of the lesson, environment or including them in an alternative way to the lesson.

Staff work, in line with the Behaviour Policy, to promote a policy for inclusion. The Academy uses a variety of strategies to help children behave and work appropriately in school. Policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed for children with a variety of medical, health and communication needs.

Areas for Development

- Implementation of an ongoing programme of CPD to ensure all members of the school community understand and act upon their Equality duties.
- Ensure future wheelchair users have access to minibus facilities to enable extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable students with disabilities to achieve their full potential.
- Ensure rigorous risk assessments are undertaken to ensure maximum participation for children with disabilities. Create a register to highlight children who need additional arrangements.

Improve the physical environment of the schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services.

This is focused on the physical environment such as stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, as well as exit routes, building entrances and the interior access to classrooms. It also includes the heating, ventilation, lighting aspects of classrooms and the accessibility of signage. Physical aids to access education may include computer systems, specialist chairs and tables and aids for concentration and coordination.

Existing provision at White House Academy

White House Academy is a single floor accessible school.

The classrooms are spacious enough to support the movement of children who either need a wheelchair or special equipment or are also able to be adapted for those children who are hard of hearing in terms of placement of furniture. This is also a consideration in the building of new classrooms. White House Academy has provided physical aids for children who need specialist equipment such as chair and table as well as the smaller aids such as wedge cushions and writing

slopes. We also provide children with interventions to support fine motor skills with the necessary equipment to do this as well as chunkier pencils and/or pencil grips to aid with handwriting.

Areas for Development

- Ensure wheelchair users have access to minibus facilities to enable extra-curricular activities.
- Installation of a hearing loop if a child was in need of the system.
- Ensure everyone is aware of the personal evacuation procedures for those children with mobility difficulties.
- Develop calm areas for children who have sensory difficulties.
- Develop the Occupational Therapy provision for those children with fine motor skills difficulties.

Improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils

This duty is to ensure that all information is available to pupils, parents and stakeholders with regard to any disabilities they may have. This can include the format of the information as well as the timeframe in which it is given out.

Existing provision at White House Academy

Office staff are sensitive to the needs of those who have more of a difficulty to communicate or a specific disability, when known. The Head of School meets with and shows round prospective pupils with their parents to ensure they have a clear understanding of the pupils' needs as well as the expectations of the school. Information is given through letters, the website, verbally and also by text. This is in addition to face-to-face meetings such as Parents Evening.

Areas for Development

- Ensure the prospectus and Annual Report contains information about access for pupils with disabilities.
- Ensure parents views are gained as to the most efficient method of communication.
- Continue to foster an environment of shared information so that parents are comfortable asking for help if needed.

Employees

Wherever practicable, White House Academy will:

- consider and seek to employ disabled people in jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications in line with the Equality Act (2010) and Disability Discrimination Act (2005)
- ensure that employees with disabilities are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- ensure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged when the renewal of fixed-term contracts is being considered.

Employees, who become disabled during their employment by The Academy, so far as is practicable, will continue to remain employed by The Academy subject to review by the Headteacher and the Board of Governors. This review will assess their ability to carry out the duties of their post. Help from related professional organisations may also be sought when considering not only the possible effects of the disability but also other consequential disadvantages, such as loss of status or financial loss.

The Academy will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments to enable the employee to continue in post. However, options might include:

- continuing in the same post
- a gradual return to work
- a reduction in hours
- redeployment
- premature retirement on grounds of incapacity
- termination of employment

In cases where a disability is a degenerative, progressive condition that develops over time, careful consideration should be given to the selection of the most appropriate option(s).

The Academy will make reasonable changes to work practices and, where possible, the workplace to enable disabled people to work successfully, including those employees who become disabled whilst employed.

The Academy will ensure that a programme of training is offered to employees to increase their awareness of students with disabilities and inform them of appropriate action to be taken when delivering the curriculum. Teaching assistants will support teaching staff as required to help ensure that disabled students have equal access to the curriculum.