

Sandbach High School & Sixth Form College

EQUALITIES POLICY
Including the Disability Access Plan for
2015 - 2016

Rationale

A commitment to equality, diversity and community cohesion is a shared commitment to educational excellence and equality for all sections of our school community. It helps us to focus attention on improving planning, decision making, resource allocation and the monitoring and evaluation of our achievements.

We encourage and support effective professional development for staff and governors to ensure we address the needs of all students, provide job satisfaction for staff, increase parental engagement and broaden representation of under-represented groups within all levels of our staff and governing body.

By “community cohesion”, we mean working towards a society in which:

- . there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities;
- . the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued;
- . similar life opportunities are available to all;
- . strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

Protected Characteristics

Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a student or prospective student by treating them less favourably because of their:

- . sex;
- . race;
- . disability;
- . religion or belief;
- . sexual orientation;
- . gender reassignment;
- . pregnancy or maternity.

These are known as the “Protected Characteristics”. The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Although not specifically covered by the Act in the context of schools, at Sandbach HSSFC we also consider “socio-economic factors” and “age” as part of our focus on equality, diversity and community cohesion.

Our Objectives

We are committed to building a cohesive school community in which we:

- . Tackle all types of discrimination;
- . Celebrate the diversity of our school and the wider world;
- . Promote equality of opportunity and outcome;
- . Build good relationships between people of different ethnic groups;
- . Contribute to the cohesion of the local community and wider society;
- . Meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- . Provide for, and support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) students

Our Principles

Our principles cover six aspects of equality, diversity and community cohesion:

1. COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

We respect and value all individuals for their own abilities, beliefs, challenges, attitudes, background and experiences, and seek to actively engage all members of our school and local community in promoting equality, diversity and community cohesion.

2. ETHOS

We endeavour to create an ethos which promotes and reflects equality, celebrates diversity, develops understanding and challenges myths, stereotypes and prejudices. Whilst promoting an accepting and welcoming community for all minority groups.

3. CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

We seek to provide experiences which broaden students' horizons in terms of culture, religion and social background, and ensure equality of access to high quality teaching and learning, an inclusive curriculum and wider opportunities for learning and personal development.

4. TACKLING DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

We seek to identify and remove all practices and customs which are discriminatory and record, report and challenge all incidents of prejudice-based bullying and harassment.

5. ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

We have high expectations of everyone involved with the school, monitor, evaluate and review outcomes for different learner groups and provide appropriate support and intervention as we endeavour to ensure that all students reach their full potential.

6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We seek to ensure that all staff are empowered to challenge discriminatory behaviour and promote equality, diversity and community cohesion through their teaching and relationships with students, and that governors understand their statutory duties.

Achieving our principles

1. COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Our commitment to equality, diversity and community cohesion will be monitored by the Headteacher who will provide an annual report to School Governors as part of his Autumn Term Headteacher's Report and will include periodic updates to the wider community through his Newsletters.

All members of our community will be invited to contribute actively to this agenda through their inputs into the School's Growth Plan with students being additionally encouraged to develop their own leadership skills through our Pupil Voice Group, as reflected in the outstanding work of the SLOTHs.

Details of our equalities work, including our "equality objectives", will be published on our school website.

We will develop further our engagement with the local community, building upon the success of the partnership work taking place under the leadership of the Sandbach and Haslington Community Education Programme.

2. ETHOS

We will celebrate the diversity of our school community including modern Britain society and reinforce our commitment to equality of opportunity in all marketing materials, including the school website.

We will encourage everyone in the school community to have a positive self-image and high self-esteem so that they may develop their potential.

We will model relationships which promote mutual respect and value similarities and differences, and face equality issues openly.

We will ensure that issues of equality, diversity and respect for human rights are promoted through all aspects of school life, including in assemblies and through classroom displays.

We will promote a “rights respecting” culture, drawing upon the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

We will audit the curriculum at least biennially for coverage of issues of equality, diversity and respect for human rights, and ensure that all year groups explore these themes across a range of subjects.

We will draw upon our work as a former Language College to embed further issues of global equality and citizenship within the curriculum.

We will ensure that students who are new to English are grouped in line with their cognitive ability and learn alongside their peers who provide good models of language and behaviour.

We will provide opportunities for students to meet people from other cultural, religious and social backgrounds, through taking part in trips and visits, meeting visitors to our school and participating in collaborative partnership projects.

We will monitor participation by different learner groups in extra-curricular activities, trips and visits, including by ethnicity.

We will ensure that the teaching materials we use acknowledge the importance of challenging discrimination and positively reflect the religious, linguistic and cultural diversity of our society.

4. TACKLING DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

We will systematically record and report all incidents which are discriminatory in terms of race, sexuality (LGBT) or disability, and ensure that these are sanctioned appropriately through the BfL system.

We will adopt a robust response to all forms of bullying and harassment, in accordance with our “Anti-bullying Policy”, reporting to the Governing body as above.

We will monitor and report on participation rates in trips, visits and extra-curricular activities, exclusion rates and the use of other sanctions by different student groupings such as ethnicity, Free School Meals (FSM), Looked After Children (LAC) and Disabled students and those with special educational needs (SEND), as well as the implementation of our rewards strategy.

We will monitor membership of the governing body and recruitment of staff by ethnicity and ensure that all job advertisements include an equal opportunities statement.

As appropriate, Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out to assess whether policies could have an adverse impact on particular groups, and whether there is potential for them to have a positive impact in terms of equality of opportunity and outcome.

5. ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

We will monitor data on progress, behaviour and attendance by different learner groups at least once per term, including by ethnicity, FSM, LAC, SEND and LGBT.

Curriculum Leaders and Achievement Coordinators will systematically evaluate the attainment and progress of different learner groups, including by ethnicity, FSM, LAC, SEND and LGBT.

Where appropriate, specific support and intervention strategies will be implemented to tackle the causes of under-achievement of individual students.

Students with capabilities in a heritage language will be encouraged to gain accreditation and will be given appropriate support.

6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We will ensure that all staff are familiar with this Policy, and the related action points as contained in the school's Growth Plan, and as necessary provide training on equality, sexuality (LGBT, diversity and community cohesion for all staff.

We will provide opportunities for staff to develop further expertise in exploring equality, sexuality (LGBT), diversity and human rights issues through their own curriculum area.

We will ensure that all governors understand their role in supporting this aspect of the school's work, including their statutory duties.

Any person who experiences, witnesses or is reasonably led to believe that this Policy has not been respected should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher and/or make use of the School's complaints procedure.

Disability Access Plan

September 2015-August 2016

Introduction

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

- not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability;

- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- to plan to increase access to education for disabled students.

This plan sets out our proposals to increase access to education for disabled students in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- 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.

It is a requirement that the school's Disability Access Plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. This Plan should also read in conjunction with the Equalities Policy.

The purpose and direction of the school's plan: vision and values

We seek to make all students welcome irrespective of their creed, race, sexuality or impairment. We have high aspirations for all our students and expect each to achieve and participate in every aspect of school life.

Information from pupil data and school audit

The DDA 1995 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. Using this definition the range of disabilities currently experienced by our students include: physical, visual, hearing, communication, learning and medical. As a result of this wide range of disabilities and a history of supporting students with disabilities, the staff has a good awareness of what the DDA requires of them and of health and safety regulations associated with the day to day care of a pupil with a physical disability (manual handling training).

Disabled students have access to most aspects of school life.

Extra-curricular activities are open to all, including overseas visits. Most areas of the school accessible to non-disabled students are now accessible to our disabled students. Areas are now accessible on both the first and second floors following the installation of a lift (funded by successful submission of a capital bid). Disabled toilet provision has been upgraded and ramps installed.

To help those visually impaired and after professional advice, appropriate 'colouring – yellow' was added to edges as necessary.

Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

Prior to this Disability Access Plan being written, stakeholders were consulted – disabled students, parents, staff and outside agencies. Their views were taken into account when writing this Plan and making appropriate changes to the school's infrastructure.

The main priorities in the school's plan

Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum

Pupil Profiles are written to advise staff on inclusive strategies to enhance access to the curriculum for disabled students. Learning Support Assistants are appointed (where necessary) to assist with physically disabled students. Learning Support Assistants are “disability champions” for the students in their care.

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

At the moment the vast majority of the ground floor is physically accessible to all disabled students on roll. Ramps have been installed at various key locations.

An additional DDA toilet has been installed in the Year 9 toilets.

The Main Car Park has clear DDA car parking spaces identified in close proximity to the school’s entrance and there is an area set aside for the safe storage of wheelchairs in school.

Measures were taken during summer 2015 to improve handrail provision, level out uneven kerbs and improving nosings on stairs.

Internal door to G8Way2 automated.

A full Disability Audit was carried out in 2014 and the consequent work identified has been scheduled over the next three years to address issues raised.

Future Planning Priorities

Improvement to be made to the toilet provision in G8Way2

Hearing loops to be provided at all reception areas and a mobile loop to be provided for events including parents’ evenings etc.

Handrails to be installed as required around school.

Further doors to be fitted with automated features, commencing with the ground floor corridor doors adjacent to the senior yard.

Improving the delivery to disabled students of information that is provided in writing for students who are not disabled:

The majority of stakeholders seem confident with the way information is delivered to students and parents. An accessible font is used in all written correspondence, this increases readability. Letters/circulars/information booklets are stored centrally on the school’s web site to make them available for further adaptation if necessary.

Management, coordination and implementation

It is the responsibility of the School’s Leadership Team and Governors, through the Premises and Environment Committee, to see that the areas identified on the Disability Access Plan are addressed.

