




South Lee Prep School
Bury St Edmunds

Disability Policy September 2024

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| Signed:  | Steve Honeywood, Chair of Governors 3/9/24 |
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Disability Policy



How is Disability Defined?

The definition of a 'disability' under the Equality Act 2010 In the Act, a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

For the Purposes of the Act, These Words Have the Following Meanings:

- 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'Long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- 'Normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Progressive Conditions Considered to be a Disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairments are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions That Are Specifically Excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

- Physical disabilities include sensory conditions, such as visual, hearing and speech impairments, and physical impairments such as cerebral palsy, hyper-mobility syndrome, paraplegia, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, Down's syndrome. (Deaf students, whose primary means of communication is sign language, may wish to consider themselves members of a linguistic minority rather than, or as well as, disabled and may require an assistant.)
- Mental health problems forming disabling conditions including clinical depression, obsessive compulsive disorders (such as ritualistic washing), psychotic conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and manic depression and other long-term conditions such as anxiety disorders.
- Hidden conditions such as asthma, Asperger's Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder / Hyperactivity Disorder, diabetes, dyspraxia, dyslexia, dyscalculia, epilepsy / petit mal and ME (chronic fatigue syndrome) are also covered.

- Progressive conditions such as multiple sclerosis, HIV/AIDS, or cancer are covered by the act as soon as they have the condition and before there is necessarily any affect on their ability to carry out day to day activities.
- People with severe disfigurements do not need to prove their impairment has a severe affect on their ability to carry out day to day duties.

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010:

- Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services.
- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably.
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty) in matters of admission and education.
- To have and regularly to update an Accessibility Plan.

The school recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and endorses the key principles which underpin an inclusive curriculum:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Over and above its willingness to discharge the above duties, the school seeks actively to support children with disabilities in accordance with its stated ethos and aims. As set out in the 'Ethos and Aims', at South Lee, education is centred around instilling a life- long love of learning in each child by developing their skills and nurturing their growth as individuals.

A disabled child is an equal member of our community and we seek simply to apply our principle of care according to the needs of each and every child.

Arrangements for Admission

The school admits the large majority of its pupils aged 2+ or 4+. Other admissions are ad hoc as places arise.

As set out in the school's published admissions procedures, the school seeks detailed information with regard to each child's background prior to admission, through the completion, by parents of a pre-entry questionnaire and a declaration with regard to any known learning difficulties and/or disabilities of which the school may need to be aware in order to make the best possible provision for each child admitted.

- All prospective parents meet with the Headmistress and/or the Head of the Early Years Foundation Stage or Head of Pre-prep, providing an opportunity to discuss the needs of their child at length.

- A child's current Nursery or School may, with the parents' consent, be visited or may be asked for a report on a child.
- Upon admission, the children and parents will be invited back. The children will do a day in their new class and the parents are welcome to come in to meet the appropriate staff.

In the above ways, the school should become fully conversant with a disability affecting any child and should, with the parents, be able to plan accordingly.

While we aim to meet each child's individual needs irrespective of ability and do not, therefore, operate a system by which we seek to admit only the most academically able, we do understand that our curriculum may not be appropriate for all children. While we would not suggest that it is possible to judge such things clearly at a tender age, we do have a responsibility to parents and to children to take a view of whether a child is likely to proceed happily throughout his or her time at the school. While it is very rarely the case that the school will decide that it is not in a child's best interests to join us at the Reception stage, it is important that we are able to leave any final decisions until we and the parents are able to take as clear as possible a view of this.'

Ad-Hoc Admissions

All prospective parents meet with the Headmistress and/or the Head of the Early Years and Foundation Stage or the Head of Pre-prep, providing an opportunity to discuss the needs of their child at length.

A report is requested from the child's current school but, while this is considered as part of the admissions process, it only informs our assessment procedure in so far as it alerts us to any special care we might need to give to a child because of family circumstances, health issues or learning difficulties.

All parents who register their child for assessment are asked to complete a declaration with regard to any known learning difficulties and/or disabilities of which the school may need to be aware and for which provision may need to be made in assessing the child.

Parents may, additionally, be asked to provide any relevant documentation with regard to a child's background and/or to complete a pre-entry questionnaire.

Overall, the school should be well-equipped to ensure that a child is fully supported throughout the process of assessment.

We assess all children whose parents wish to register them for a 7+ place.

While we aim to meet each child's individual needs irrespective of ability and do not, therefore, operate a system by which we seek to admit only the most academically able, we do understand that our curriculum, which leads ultimately to independent senior school entry and scholarship exams, may not be appropriate for all children. In such circumstances, we have a responsibility to parents and to children to take a view of whether a child is likely to proceed happily throughout his or her time at the school.

Our first consideration is given to siblings. We give priority to siblings of children already in the school because we are committed to our families and to the relationship between home and school. Where we believe that a sibling will cope happily with our curriculum, we make an offer of a place, irrespective of the performance of other candidates.

Where a child has an identified learning difficulty, our consideration is influenced by two factors – whether we believe that, with appropriate support, a child will thrive at South Lee and whether we are able to make appropriate provision. If the former is the case, we need then to look at the balance of learning support needs within the particular year group, including those children already within the school, to ensure that provision can be made without detriment to the education of other children. In this respect, there needs to be an appropriate balance of children with and without learning difficulties. If all is well in this respect, then we need to ascertain what the demands will be on our Individual Development staffing and whether we can provide appropriate staffing. If we can satisfy ourselves on these counts, then we are able to offer a place but it may well be that such a process takes a little longer, given the complications involved. Where a possible difficulty is identified in the course of our assessments or where we would consider it valuable in any case, we may ask parents to bring a child for further assessment by our Individual Development Department, to determine whether a specific learning difficulty exists and/or what the nature and degree of the difficulty is. We are happy to offer this further assessment even in those cases where we are unable to offer a place, in the best interests of the child.

Admissions and Disability

Through the above procedures, the school discharges its duties:

- Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admission
- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage

As a school, we have managed a range of conditions, including: Visual impairment, hearing and speech impairments, physical and other impairments, including obsessive-compulsive disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder/Hyperactivity Disorder, diabetes, dyspraxia, dyslexia, dyscalculia, epilepsy/petit mal, cancer, profound deafness.

With this knowledge and experience, and with the established ethos mentioned above, we will continue to seek to make reasonable adjustments so that, where possible, children covered by SEN and Disability (formally SENDA) can benefit from an equality of treatment and educational opportunity.

The following procedures are in place:

Pre-Admission

A lot of planning will take place before the child arrives at school. This will include:

- Information gathering from parents, the child's current school or nursery and relevant external agencies.
- Completion of the 'reasonable adjustments checklist' to ensure the child falls under SENDA
- Writing a Care Plan tailored to the needs of the child. This will involve meeting with parents and meeting with the child to discuss their preferences. It may also involve meeting with external agencies who specialise in dealing with that particular disability, who can offer support to the school when planning the appropriate provision for the child.
- Providing adequate training for staff so that they feel confident to carry out the care plan

- Providing the correct resources for the child so that he/she has as much access to the curriculum as possible.

After Admission

- Managing the pastoral care of the child through the school's pastoral system and fostering the child's social and emotional development
- Reviewing the care plan with the parents and child at the end of each term so that planning can be put in place for the following term.
- Communicating with future schools with regard to the child's needs

If the onset of disability occurs during a child's time with us, all of the above will be put in place.

Despite all this, it may not be possible to cater for all disabilities. If this is the case the school will explain the reasons for this decision to the parents of the individual child.

Planning for a Disabled Child Prior to His or Her Arrival

As set out above, the disclosure of a child's disability should be made when the admissions process begins, or immediately the disability becomes apparent, so that reasonable adjustments can be made as soon as possible. The disclosure should be made in writing on the form provided but could be given by the child's parents or guardian to any member of staff, academic or medical. This information will be passed to the Headmistress and then to other staff on a 'need to know' basis.

Parents can make a request for confidentiality and detailed discussion of all the practicalities involved would then follow. In some cases, it might be desirable to enlist the assistance and understanding of the child's peer group as well as staff. In our experience, if children understand the disability, they are more likely to be sensitive to the needs of the disabled child.

Access to Teaching and Learning

In planning and teaching, the staff have responsibility for:

- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

In pursuit of these goals:

- Pupils covered by SEN and Disability will be put on the Individual Needs Database and an Individual Educational Plan will be devised, if necessary, so that targets can be set and monitored. Such plans are agreed with parents and are reviewed at least twice annually.
- The school recognises that disability and learning difficulty are not necessarily associated and that for some disabled children, the practicalities of physical access to the full curriculum may be the prime concern. In such cases, the key staff may be pastoral and/or medical.

- With regard either to disability and/or to learning difficulties, additional assistance may be required. The school's provision for Individual Needs is subsidised and there is a range of learning support within the school's mainstream provision but, in cases where a learning difficulty is diagnosed prior to a child's arrival at the school, the cost of any additional provision deemed necessary by the school is borne by the parents. With regard to other disabilities, the school undertakes to manage the disability from within its staffing resources, except in those cases where such provision would be detrimental to the desired levels of supervision and care of other children, in which circumstances parents may be asked to bear the cost of any necessary additional assistance.

Assessment requirements of disabled pupils will be anticipated as far as possible, e.g. the use of a scribe or word processor, or extra time in school and public exams is already catered for as a matter of course. The planning of access to teaching and learning is undertaken systematically, irrespective of learning difficulties or disabilities:

- On a weekly basis through year group meetings and full staff meetings on each of the school's sites.
- On a frequent and regular basis, through subject departmental meetings.
- On a twice-yearly basis through an extensive internal review of each pupil's needs.
- Through a cycle of parents' evenings and through parental responses to written reports.
- Through the monitoring by the Senior Management of a frequently updated database of all significant items of 'pupil action'.

Particular attention is paid to each child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by the Individual Development department, in which a number of qualified specialist teachers are employed.

On a pupil by pupil basis, the school seeks to ensure that there is provision of:

- Appropriately modified materials
- Appropriate media for learning – e.g. for auditory or visual impairment
- Appropriate technology
- All teaching staff are in direct and frequent contact with the relevant Individual Development teachers and share with them the planning of differentiation according to the needs of the child.
- Wherever possible, the school will seek to maintain access to the PE curriculum for those with physical difficulties. All such arrangements are made with the support and agreement of the parents and taking the wishes of the child into account.
- For certain out of school visits it might be difficult to accommodate a disabled child and the member of staff arranging a visit will have to plan the work with the needs of all children in mind. It might be possible for the disabled child to access the elements of an educational visit by some other means e.g. written or photographic material, tape or video recording etc.

Pastoral Care

The school's approach to pastoral care is founded on the belief that emotional and social well-being and growth, self-esteem and confidence are of prime importance in themselves and are inextricably linked with academic progress.

The Pastoral Care policy outlines:

- Arrangements for PSHE and PSHE related provision within the school
- Opportunities for children to contribute to the welfare of the school community
- Opportunities to contribute to charitable work beyond the school community, much of which is devoted to raising awareness of and contributing to provision for disability
- Arrangements for pupil monitoring
- Arrangements for contact with home,
- The school's approach to Bullying and other major pastoral concerns
- The school's approach to sanctions
- The school's approach to temporary and permanent exclusion

The tutor, the Deputy Pastoral, the Individual Development Department and medical staff (as necessary), and the school's Senior Management will all be aware of and involved in addressing the pastoral and other needs of any child with a learning difficulty or disability.

Attention will be paid to the needs of a child beyond, as well as in the classroom.

- Break times can be taken within supervised areas on each of the school's two sites.
- Lunch is a time when children can be sociable and every effort would be made to enable the disabled child to take part.
- The school recognises that social skills can be affected by conditions such as ADHD/ADD, Asperger Syndrome and Dyspraxia.
- 'Social skills' teaching is given in small groups as appropriate to the children's needs.
- Peer group awareness of any relevant condition is promoted through PSE, with the parents' consent and children are often willingly enlisted to act as 'buddies' to those with difficulties that may affect their broader social life.

The school places the greatest emphasis on tolerance and care and it is in this context that, in accordance with its pastoral policy, any incident of bullying related to a disability would be considered as a major pastoral concern.

The school undertakes not to discriminate against disabled pupils in its exclusions policy.

Arrangements for communication with home are essential to the effective management of pastoral care. Where a parental disability obstructs such communication, the school undertakes to seek ways of overcoming any problems.

For a wheelchair bound parent, special arrangements have been made for meetings to discuss progress and welfare with staff.

For a deaf parent, email has been used as the primary form of communication and we get support from the Deaf Awareness for face to face meetings.

The procedure for parental complaints is set out in 'Complaints Procedure in the Care section on the website. In accordance with the procedure outlined therein, complaints regarding any breach of the school's disability policy would, if not resolved through the normal channels, be heard by a Complaints Panel.

Continuing Planning and Review of Provision Throughout a Child's Schooling

As set out above and in the above-mentioned documentation, systems are in place for the continuing review and adjustment of provision for each child throughout his or her time at the school.

By agreement with the parents and in accordance with both good practice and the requirements of the receiving school, the Headmistress will provide information regarding a child's learning difficulty and/or disability and will work closely with the receiving school to ensure that appropriate provision is put in place prior to the child's arrival.

Physical Environment

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 refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. The school will make adjustments to the existing physical environment better to accommodate the needs of current pupils in so far as this is reasonably possible within the school's financial constraints. The school will maintain, review and revise its Accessibility planning as appropriate, through meetings of the Senior Management Committee and through its annual development planning cycle.