

# **THE DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY**

## **A Disability Equality Scheme**

At St Margaret's, we create a tolerant, inclusive community in which each person is respected and recognised as of equal value. We aim to meet the five outcomes of "Every Child Matters", ensuring that each one stays safe, is healthy, enjoys and achieves, makes a positive contribution and achieves economic wellbeing.

St Margaret's is committed to the care and wellbeing of the children so that they may grow and learn in a safe, secure environment. In all aspects of the school, governors, staff, children, parents and the wider community are committed to working together to ensure that the school community remains true to the equal value principle underpinning its policies.

Through a series of inter-related policies and procedural guidelines we support disability equality in all aspects of school life for students, staff and visitors. All new policies and protocols are scrutinised to ensure access and equality in diversity.

### **EQUAL VALUE PRINCIPLE**

Each child at St Margaret's has equal value. The policy of equality of opportunity in diversity is based on the principle of respect for the individual. The school is an integrated whole, inclusive of the students with physical or sensory impairments, communication, learning, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. It addresses each person's unique needs, intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional or social.

All members of the school community work together to create an atmosphere in which each member can grow and flourish regardless of race, class, colour, creed, sex, sexuality, age or ability. Positive interpersonal relationships are fostered in a climate of high expectations and respect for individual achievement.

All children experience a community of diversity in which they value and celebrate the unique contribution that each individual makes. They learn to respect the rights not only of each other but also of groups in the local and wider community.

The language used in the school community, spoken or written fosters a positive attitude to each person whatever her/his race, class, colour, creed, sex, sexuality, age or ability.

Children have full and open access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to a range of extra-curricular experiences. Attention is given to adequate resources and the development of an appropriate environment to meet the needs of individual children and groups within the school community.

### **REQUIREMENTS ON SCHOOLS**

The Disability Equality Duty (2006) requires schools to be proactive in promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination, having regard to Part 5A of the

Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This scheme plans for developments over the next years.

## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

St Margaret's continues to develop its ability to provide an inclusive, accessible environment for students and staff with disabilities and to welcome members of the local community. It aims to meet the five outcomes of the Children Act 2004. It has regard to the general duty to:

- promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate disability-related harassment
- promote positive attitudes to people with disabilities
- encourage the participation of people with disabilities
- take into account people's disabilities and consider positive discrimination

## **ROLE OF KEY PERSONNEL**

### **Governors**

Governors on the Policy and Curriculum committee monitor the SEN policy on behalf of the full board. It is reviewed annually. They ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities; Governors in premises committee ensure access issues are a priority; Governors in staffing committee ensure that staffing policies provide access for people with disabilities.

### **The Senior Management Team (SMT)**

The Headteacher and SMT ensure that all policies and practices, protocols and provision have regard to the Disability Equality Duty.

### **All Staff**

Implement the policies and continue to develop inclusive practices.

## **COMPLAINTS**

Parents and staff have access to the school's Complaints Procedures.

## **St Margaret's CEP School's Disability Equality Duty Scheme**

The Disability Equality Duty (2006) requires schools to be proactive in promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination, having regard to Part 5A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1005. This scheme plans for developments over the next years via an accessibility plan.

St Margaret's is justifiably proud of both its growing expertise and achievement in managing the learning and needs of a wide range of students with disabilities.

The school's Mission Statement "We seek to be a learning centre of excellence at the heart of the local community, fostering the intellectual, spiritual and emotional development of all who play a part in the school, looking to follow the teachings of Jesus in all we do" outlines the school's equal value principle.

The school has high expectations and ambitions for all children and supports them in participating and achieving in every aspect of school life.

The school continually reviews established practice, as part of its School Development Plan (SDP), there is a clear line management system to support staff and Governors' committees ensure that the school continues to meet statutory requirements and drives forward to excellence.

The school is committed to working towards increased accessibility, within the three areas of focus of the Disability Discrimination Act:

- increasing access to the curriculum for students with disabilities
- making improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access to education and associated services
- making written information accessible in a range of different ways for students with disabilities, where it is provided in writing for students who are not disabled

We take into account the views expressed by children, their parents, staff or members of the community and ensure policies are in place to support progress. Governors, who carry the ultimate responsibility, monitor all policies.

All policies also aim to meet the five outcomes from "Every Child Matters" for all children:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well being

### **Duty 1: Increasing access to the curriculum for children with disabilities**

#### **Review of current provision:**

Children's disabilities are identified at the earliest opportunity based on information provided by parents' carers or other providers of education. Staff meet with parents

to assess the level of disability and to identify the steps that the school needs to take to meet those needs.

Children with a physical disability have an individualised care plan written and agreed with parents and the school's professional staff, which is reviewed regularly. Children with a medical condition have a medical care plan which is accessed by all staff working with the child.

Reasonable adjustments are made to a child's timetable to enable each one to participate as fully as is practically able in every lesson. Some children may access aspects of the curriculum in a different setting eg. horse riding, swimming and wheelchair basketball.

Where children with statements of SEN have a specific weakness in the core subjects, the children will receive support on a 1 to 1 basis or within a small group from a member of the SEN support team. Meetings with parents are encouraged and occur frequently on an informal basis as well as taking place formally as part of the whole school's review processes. The progress of children is monitored through their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

**Duty 2: Making improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access to education and associated services**

**Review of current provision:**

The school is in the main accessible to all wheelchair users although not every exit has a ramp. However there are routes around the school enabling a wheelchair user to get from one point to another, but not always in the most direct way. The greatest challenge has been in the provision of a ramp outside the Year 1 classes, which has never been resolved because of the configuration of the patio area. A ramp could be provided but because of the need for a gentle gradient it would occupy the whole of the patio area, significantly reducing the children's play space.

A lift serves the newer part of the school which was built on a higher level because of the lay of the land. An accessible toilet featured in the 2004 extension of the school and provides ample space for wheelchair use. The lack of a medical room presents its own real challenge, with a new provision planned for in the next capital build project which will take place some time after 2011.

**Duty 3: Making written information accessible in a range of different ways for disable children, where it is provided in writing for children who are not disabled**

Teachers provide differentiated levels of access to learning in order to meet the variety of needs of children. The school for a considerable number of years has had children with a disability, which has sensitised teachers in all curriculum areas towards meeting this need.

The widespread use of technology has increased opportunities for all children to access learning. Specialist training sessions taken by experts in their field, are often provided for staff looking at a variety of disabilities.

Children with a hearing impairment have access to equipment that is in constant use to amplify voice, which is proving effective in increasing access to independent learning.

Two members of staff have been trained in the use of British Sign Language, with one of the Learning Mentors being trained to an advanced level.