



WILLOW TREE Academy



THE LEAF CENTRE



Disability and Equality Policy

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Contents:

Statement of intent

Aims and Expectations

The National Context

Access to support

Audit of current provision

Involvement and consultation

Accessibility Plan

Complaints Procedure

Review and revision

Statement of Intent

Rockingham Junior and Infant School, as part of Willow Tree Academy, is committed to providing outstanding provision and teaching and learning experiences for **all** children.

Rockingham Junior and Infant School has high aspirations for all pupils and expects them to be able to participate in all aspects of school life as well as reach their full personal potential. The school is fully committed to equal opportunities in line with national government policy and legislation. The Governors and Staff at Rockingham Junior and Infant School are committed to providing all pupils with a curriculum which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination. We are committed to overcoming discriminatory attitudes with an approach which seeks to raise awareness and develop positive attitudes.

Rockingham Junior and Infant School is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion across our school, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Under equality and diversity legislation, schools have responsibilities and duties relating to the following protected characteristics:

- Gender/ Gender Reassignment
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Disability
- Age

For all pupils, including those with a disability, the school will:

- Make adjustments to accessibility and to the curriculum where needed;
- Set appropriate learning challenges;
- Respond to pupils' diverse needs;
- Overcome all potential barriers to learning, and provide access to all elements of school life, for individuals and groups of pupils
- Have high expectations for all pupils in all aspects of school life.

The facilities in our school building are fully inclusive of all children, including those with additional needs and disabilities, for example, disabled toilet facilities, signage in other languages, ramped access, sensory rooms and gardens. The school will continue to identify and remove barriers for all disabled pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors to school, in every area of school life and ensure everyone is welcomed.

The Governing Body of Rockingham Junior and Infant School will endeavour to fulfil the three key duties towards disabled pupils as outlined in Part Four of the Disability Discrimination Act. These are -

- To eliminate conduct that is prohibited by the Act

- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- To foster good relations across all characteristics.

The Governing Body will also ensure that all members of the school community understand and are committed to these three key duties and that in the writing of policies or improving the quality of school life for any pupils, the views of those directly involved will be sought and where possible, acted upon.

Aims and Expectations

At Rockingham Junior and Infant School, we do not discriminate against anyone, and we provide opportunities and positive educational experiences which, in turn, enables the development of pupil's positive social attitudes. Our aims are outlined below:

- We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education we provide and ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning.
- We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
- We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.
- We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups.
- We embed teaching about the British Values into our curriculum offer.

The National Context

Children and Families Act 2014

Within our academy we closely follow the guidelines set out in the Children and Families Act, which was brought into law on 1st September 2014, stating that LA's are required to:

- Identify children and young people (up to the age of 25) with SEN.
- Assess the child or young person's education, health and care needs, taking account of educational, medical, psychological and other factors, where necessary.
- Prepare a formal education, health and care (EHC) plan for those needs, and specify the provision which should be made to meet them.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 (amended in March 2015)

The majority of provisions in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 set duties for LAs to assess educational, health and care needs, and to create, amend and withdraw EHC Plans.

Within Willow Tree Academy, our provision for SEND is needs-led and is in line with the local authority guidance. We work with their team closely to ensure that the best provision for these children is achieved.

The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014

Budgets associated with SEND allowances are managed by our finance officer, in collaboration with the LA and the SENCO in school. High quality resources, teaching staff and training are ways in which this budget is used.

SEND Code of Practice

See Inclusion policy for how we implement this policy in Rockingham Junior and Infant School and across Willow Tree Academy

The Equality Act 2010

This national policy is adhered to as part of day to day practice and all staff are aware of the need and implications of ensuring equality for all is high on the agenda towards achieving outstanding Quality First Teaching and provision for the children we teach. The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have regard to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and requires that:

- Schools must not treat pupils with SEND less favourably because of a protected characteristic – disability is a protected characteristic.
- Schools must take reasonable steps to avoid putting these pupils at a substantial disadvantage, including by providing auxiliary aids and services as part of the reasonable adjustments duty.
- Schools must prepare accessibility plans, showing how they will improve access to education for disabled pupils.

When is a person considered to have a disability?

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

As part of the Revised Code of Practice implemented in 2015, disability was defined as; *‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer.*

Alongside the definitions that can be found within the Equality Act 2010, Willow Tree Academy have used the Code of Practice to reform their policies in relation to pupils with SEND. From this, we know;

- We will safeguard our children from any type of discrimination and follow the current legislation around keeping children safe in education.
- We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- We will not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person's disability
- We will make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
- We will have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and nondisabled children and young people.
- We must include an overview of our care and the services and provision we have for all children as part of the local offer
- We will set objectives which are specific and measurable.

Access to Support

It is vital that the school works closely with a range of agencies to provide the best possible support for pupils.

These include:

- Hearing Impaired Service
- Visually Impaired Service
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Team
- Educational Psychology Service
- Parent Partnership Service
- Specialist Inclusion Services (previously Learning Support Services)

Within all of our schools at Willow Tree Academy -

The Governing Body will carry out its duties under disability legislation. This responsibility is delegated to the Headteacher in the day to day management of the school.

The new general duty means that school's Governing Body must, in carrying out functions, have due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminate discrimination which is unlawful under the Act;
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encourage participation by disabled people in school life;

- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where this involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

Audit of current provision to ensure Equality

- The curriculum we offer is broad and offers profound primary experiences through which equality and inclusion is a central component.
- The new RHE (Relationships and Health Education) curriculum has become statutory and covers discriminating between sex and gender)
- The entrances are accessible.
- There is a quiet area in the yard for all pupils to access
- Time out spaces are designated for individuals in school, as well as many **nurture and SEMH opportunities for groups and individuals.**
- There is very good access to and support network from outside professionals and agencies to support staff/ pupils in school
- **Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out for both in school and off site activities** and these always take into account any child with a specific need or disability. Staff will also consult with other professionals when carrying out a risk assessment for a visit where a child with a disability is to attend – for example LA Health and Safety department
- **Care plans are effectively implemented and reviewed regularly for those with medical needs/ disabilities**
- Staff work closely with outside providers of after school clubs to ensure that any information about a specific child is communicated to the relevant party and reasonable adjustments are made to allow a child with a disability to attend, for example school sport club.

For any children joining the school we would seek to begin the evidence gathering as far in advance as possible and liaise with all relevant agencies to facilitate the smooth transition into school for both the child and family.

Involvement and Consultation

Within our academy, each of our schools will involve and consult with –

- Pupils where they are able to comment on and have views about their needs
- Parents and carers concerning the needs of their child and or the needs of the parent or family member with regard to a disability
- All staff in school
- Visitors to school events or those who use the school building at other times

As a school we will consult –

- **Regularly** in the case of children with a specific disability

- **As appropriate** e.g. for parents/ visitors visiting school for an event such as a concert or performance
- **Previous schools** prior to a child with a disability joining our school

As a school we will consult by –

- Inviting all relevant parties to regular review meetings
- Ensuring that all new parents and families are informed of this policy and access arrangements in school as part of the induction process
- Ensuring that all new members of staff are informed of this policy and the school's ethos and policy towards any pupil or adult with a disability
- Ensuring that all members of staff are aware of any support available to them should they have a disability
- Ensuring that we meet with all appropriate agencies in order to access training and ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made.

Accessibility Plan

Please see additional Accessibility plan on the school website

Complaints procedure

As part of the general publicity about complaints procedures, it is important for parents to know where they can go for information, advice and advocacy, if they require it. The school's SENCO meets and communicates with parents regularly about the needs of their child and the progress they are making. Parental involvement is a vital part of our ethos and our inclusivity. If for any reason parents/carers are not happy, school can be contacted and a meeting will be arranged to discuss how this can be addressed in order to maintain positive relationships and ensure all children are happy and making good progress. If for any reason, a formal complaint is necessary, please be advised to see our academy complaints policy, available on the school website.

Review and Revision

A working party of staff/governors will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy annually and adjustments to the scheme will be made as necessary.