



St Stephen's
CE Primary School

Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan 2025 - 2028

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Section 1

Introduction – Background Information

Disability Discrimination Act

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 pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body at St Stephen's to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

The plan must be renewed every three years. **The current period is 2025-2028.**

Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 so that it now places a duty on all public authorities, including schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favorably than other persons.

The duty does not create new individual rights for disabled people. The duty provides a framework for schools to carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way. The duty thus reinforces the pre-existing duties under the Act. There are both general and specific duties. These duties are described in more detail in the next section.

The most important specific requirement is for public authorities, including schools, to have a Disability Equality Scheme. This requirement for schools came into force in December 2006 (for secondary schools) and December 2007 (for other schools).

This plan outlines how we at St. Stephen's will cover the requirements of the scheme.

Section 2

Definitions and Duties: What do we need to know?

Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) 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”

The definition can include a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Impairment does not of itself mean that a pupil is disabled. It is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities that has to be considered.

The test of whether impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one or more of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

A child's ability to memorise, concentrate, learn, speak, move is central to their education. An impairment that has a long-term and substantial effect on a child's ability to do these things may therefore amount to a disability.

Long-term and substantial

The expressions 'long-term' and 'substantial' are somewhat misleading. 'Long-term' is defined in the DDA as 12 months or more. Clearly, this rules out conditions such as a broken limb, which is likely to mend within that time.

'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial' but it may helpfully be thought of as meaning 'having some substance.' The combined effect of these two terms is to include more people in the definition of disability than is commonly anticipated.

The definition in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is broad. It includes more pupils than many people think. There is a significant overlap with pupils with special educational needs, though the definition of special educational needs does not cover all disabled children, for example: pupils with medical conditions, disfigurements and other impairments may count as disabled but may not have special educational needs.

The existence of an impairment or condition does not depend on an official diagnosis. If the impairment is long-term and has a substantial adverse effect, it falls within the terms of the Act whether there has been an official diagnosis or not.

The Duties in Part 4

It is unlawful for schools to discriminate against disabled pupils. A school discriminates if:

- It treats a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favorably than another for a reason related to their disability and without justification
- It fails, without justification, to take reasonable steps to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage.

This duty is often known as the 'reasonable adjustments' duty

The reasonable adjustments duty requires schools to think ahead, anticipate the barriers that disabled pupils may face and remove or minimise them before a disabled pupil is placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments may need to be made in admissions, exclusions and 'education and associated services,' a term that covers every aspect of the life of the school. A Code of Practice, published by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) provides guidance on the way that the duties operate.

In general, it is the governing body of the school that is the 'responsible body' for the DDA duties and needs to ensure that everyone in the school, staff or volunteer, is aware of the duties owed to disabled pupils. To avoid discrimination against any disabled pupil, all staff need to implement the duties in relation to their area of responsibility.

If parents think that their child has been discriminated against, they have a right of redress by making a claim of disability discrimination to the SEN and Disability Tribunal. If the Tribunal finds that, a school has discriminated unlawfully against a disabled pupil it can order any remedy that it sees fit, except financial compensation.

Disability Equality Duty

The changes to the DDA 1995 brought about by the DDA 2005 have brought about a change in focus from a reactive to a proactive attitude to disability. The Disability Equality Duty includes both general and specific duties. The DRC again provides Codes of Practice for public authorities and schools must have 'due regard' to the Codes.

Due Regard

"Due regard" comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. In all their decisions and functions schools should give due weight to the need to promote disability equality in proportion to its relevance. This requires more than simply giving consideration to disability equality.

Disability equality will be more relevant to some functions than others. Schools will need to take care when assessing relevance, as many areas of their functioning are likely to be of relevance to disabled people.

Proportionality requires greater consideration to be given to disability equality in relation to functions or policies that have the most effect on disabled people. Where changing a function or proposed policy would lead to significant benefits to disabled people, the need for such a change will carry added weight when balanced against other considerations.

It will not always be possible for authorities to adopt the course of action which will best promote disability equality but schools must ensure that they have due regard to the requirement to promote disability equality alongside other competing requirements.

The General Duty

The general duty requires schools to consider the six issues listed in the Introduction in all actions, which they take. The key task is to consider the promotion of disability equality and making sure it is, over time, mainstreamed into all school functions. This includes activities inside and out of the classroom as well as all other aspects of school; life e.g. extended schools, school lettings, employment etc.

The general duty requires schools not only to have due regard to disability equality when making decisions about the future. They will also need to take action to tackle the consequences of decisions in the past which failed to give due regard to disability equality. This is best approached by working towards closing the gaps in outcomes.

The general duty will build on existing responsibilities under disability legislation in relation to schools, including the duties to make reasonable adjustments, and to plan strategically to increase access to schools over time. Schools can implement the general duty by actively reviewing all their policies, procedures and planned access improvements to remove barriers with a view to greater recruitment and retention of disabled staff; and greater participation of disabled pupils, disabled parents and disabled people in all aspects of school life, in the wider community and in the non-educational services, they might provide.

Schools will use the framework of the specific duties to structure their information gathering and action planning in relation to the duty. Involving disabled people and where appropriate both disabled parents and parents of disabled children in setting the school development plans and conducting the daily running of the school is likely to be necessary for the general duty to be effectively met.

The Specific Duty

The specific duty regulations require authorities, including schools, to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme, to implement certain aspects of the Scheme and to report on it.

- A school should publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfill its general and specific duties
- A school should involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme
- The Scheme should include a statement of:
 - the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme
 - the authority's methods for impact assessment
 - steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the "action plan")
 - the authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, and, where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions
 - the authority's arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes
 - a school must, within three years of the Scheme being published, take the steps set out in its action plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information
 - A school must publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

Section 3
Vision and Values at St. Stephen's C of E

Our vision is about celebrating the uniqueness of every individual, inspiring a lifelong love of learning and experiencing life in all its fullness.

Our vision is of:

A caring Christian school family within which everyone feels safe, welcomed and valued.

A school in which all individuals feel excitement, joy and challenge in their learning as they develop their God-given gifts and achieve all of which they are capable.

An environment in which learners flourish and excel, grow in character, faith and wisdom and develop hope and aspiration.

A school that prepares and equips all children to move on to the next stage with confidence, resilience and motivation to succeed.

An outward-looking school, which guides and encourages everyone, in partnership with parents and carers, the church and others, to serve and make a valuable contribution to the world in which they live.

Our mission statement:

Learning, loving and growing, together as God's children.

The vision and mission statements were reviewed and updated by a working party of children, staff, parents and governors in September 2018.

Section 4

Accessibility at St. Stephen's School

St. Stephen's School's governors and staff have regard to the "Code of Practice for Schools" issued by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) concerning the DDA. The school will also follow the guidance issued by the DfES in 2006 entitled *"Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and Early Years settings."*

St. Stephen's School will ensure that all staff and governors are aware of the implications of the DDA and, through training and development opportunities, embed the good practice across all aspects of school life.

Contextual Information

The majority of the school building and playground is accessible for a child in a wheelchair, thanks to the new ramps that have been fitted to the fire access and egress points.

There are three sets of internal stairs in the building: in the main corridor that separates KS1 and KS2, in the corridor leading from the hall to The HUB and the Year 1 classroom and access to the Upper KS2 classrooms. All stairways are fitted with handrails. In order to accommodate a child in a wheelchair, we would rearrange the classrooms to ensure that access to all necessary areas is possible. Two classrooms have unrestricted access to toilets, the hall, first aid and an accessible toilet.

Since the last review, the school playground has been resurfaced; an extension to KS2 has been completed with a ramp at the entrance and an accessible toilet on the lower floor. The new entrance to KS2 has been designed to accommodate a lift should that be necessary on the future. An additional door has been put into the Year 1 classroom to provide access to the Year 1 shared outdoor area and EYFS to aid transition. Two accessible parking bays have been created at the front entrance where the kerb is lowered for ease of wheelchair (or other mobility aids) access.

The Current Range of Disabilities and Health Needs within St Stephen's CE Primary School

The school has children with a range of disabilities that include Autistic Spectrum Disorder, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, visual impairment and serious medical conditions. When children enter school with specific disabilities, the school contacts the LA professionals for assessments, support and guidance for the school and parents.

We have a number of children who have asthma and all staff are aware of these children. Inhalers are kept in the classrooms and a record of use is noted.

Some children have allergies or food intolerances/cultural food choices. Allergies are reported to kitchen staff and information is passed onto the next class teacher using the St Stephen's transition form at the end of each academic year.

All medical information is available to staff as it is recorded on Arbor; the school's management information system. Children with serious conditions have a care plan and photograph in the office and on the staff notice board.

We have three competent First Aiders who hold current First Aid certificates. All EYFS staff are trained in paediatric first aid.

All medication is kept in a central safe and secure place, which has easy access for First Aiders and staff members.

Administration of Medicines consent forms are filled in by parents outlining the illness and amount and time of medication. All medication that is given is recorded.

Section 5

Involvement

The school has a policy of regular school and playground council meetings where pupils are able to express their views that are valued and responded to whenever possible.

There are regular building users meetings at which all members of the wider school community are able to express opinions and contribute to the improvement of the school building. Building users include the Church, Brownies, Cubs and Scouts and includes wheelchair users and people with other disabilities.

The head teacher and all other teaching staff have an “open door” policy to enable parents to raise issues at any time, which are always valued and responded to as appropriate.

Section 6

Management, Coordination and Implementation

Whilst **all** school users have been included in the development of this scheme and the related action plan, it is the school SENDCo, and Head teacher, who are primarily responsible for the management, coordination and implementation of this scheme.

The whole governing body is aware of the scheme and will have responsibility for monitoring and implementing the scheme.

The school keeps a detailed record of all pupils with SEN and disabilities, which is reviewed and updated, termly by the SENDCo.

The school monitors the progress of children with disabilities or SEND as a group, using ARBOR data from each year group. We will continue to monitor the progress of children with SEN or a disability in this way in order to achieve maximum progress for all pupils.

Provision maps, EHCP action plans and care plans ensure that teachers meet the additional needs of all pupils and are responsive to their unique requirements. These systems are reviewed and updated regularly by class teachers and TAs and are monitored by the SENDCo.

Section 7
St. Stephen's School Action Plan 2025-2028

Actions	Strategies	Outcome
To continue to train staff to enable them to meet the needs of children with a range of SEND.	SENDCo to review the needs of children and provide training for staff as needed.	All children to access the curriculum.
To ensure that all children are able to access all out-of-school activities. e.g. clubs, trips, residential visits etc.	Review of out of school provision to ensure compliance with legislation.	All providers of out-of-school education will comply with legislation to ensure that the needs of all children are met.
To provide specialist equipment to promote participation in learning by all pupils.	Assess the needs of the children in each class and provide equipment as needed. e.g. special pencil grips, headphones, writing slopes etc.	Children will develop independent learning skills.
To meet the needs of individuals during statutory end of KS2 tests.	Children will be assessed in accordance with regular classroom practice, and additional time, use of equipment etc. will be applied for as needed.	Barriers to learning will be reduced or removed, enabling children to achieve their full potential.

Strand 2: Improving the physical environment

Actions	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe
To ensure that, where possible, the school buildings and grounds are accessible for all children and adults and continue to improve access to the school's physical environment for all.	Audit of accessibility of school buildings and grounds by Governors. Suggest actions and implement as budget allows.	Modifications will be made to the school building to improve access. Ramp added April 2023 in place of step outside LKS2 classrooms (external environment)	On going.

Strand 3: Information for disabled pupils which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

Actions	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe
To ensure that all parents and other members of the school community can access information.	Written information will be provided in alternative formats as necessary.	Written information will be provided in alternative formats as necessary.	As needed.

To ensure that parents who are unable to attend school, because of a disability, can access parents' evenings.	Staff to hold parents' evenings by phone or send home written information.	Parents are informed of children's progress.	Termly.
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Strand 4: Disability Equality Duty - school actions

Actions	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe
To improve staff awareness of disability issues.	Review staff training needs. Provide training for members of the school community as appropriate.	Whole school community aware of issues.	Ongoing.
To ensure that all policies consider the implications of disability access.	Consider during review of policies.	Policies reflect current legislation.	Ongoing.