

**LONGBENTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Disability Equality Scheme**

**January 2014 – December 2017**

1. **Introduction**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 introduced a new duty on all schools to promote equality. The disability equality duty imposes on schools:

* a general duty and
* a specific duty

**The General Duty**

The duty requires schools, when carrying out functions, to have due regard to the need to:

* promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and non-disabled people
* eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
* eliminate harassment of disabled people related to their disability
* promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
* encourage participation of disabled people in public life
* take steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

**The Specific Duty**

The specific duty requires the schools to:

* prepare and publish a school disability equality scheme
* involve disabled people in the development of the scheme.
* implement the scheme
* report on the scheme.

The purpose of the scheme is to demonstrate how the school is going to meet its disability equality duty. Amongst other matters the school must:

* involve disabled people (students, staff & parents) in its preparation
* set out in the scheme:

- how disabled people have been involved in its preparation;

- arrangements to gather information covering the effect of the school’s policies on:

I. the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees;

II. the educational opportunities available to, and the achievements of disabled pupils;

III. the school’s methods for assessing the impact of its current or proposed policies and practices on disability equality;

IV. the steps the school is going to take to meet the general duty (the school’s action plan);

V. the arrangements for using information to support the review of the action plan and to inform subsequent schemes

* implement the actions in its scheme within three years;
* report on its scheme annually;
* review and revise its scheme every three years.

A school is not required to do anything under its scheme which is unreasonable or impractical.

The scheme sets out the steps the school’s governing body will take to improved outcomes for disabled pupils, parents/carers and staff in all aspects of school life and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

1. **Definition of “disability”**

The Disability Discrimination Act 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’.

* ‘physical impairment’ includes sensory impairments;
* ‘mental impairment’ includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness;
* ‘substantial’ means “more than minor or trivial”; and
* ‘long-term’ is defined as 12 months or more.

The definition of disability includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments like dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These impairments are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term, as defined above.

The impact on normal day-to-day activities concerns the effect of the impairment on:

* 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.

Some people are automatically covered by the definition of disability: those with cancer, multiple sclerosis, HIV infection or a severe disfigurement. There are special provisions for people with progressive or recurring conditions.

For children and young people in schools, there is a significant overlap between those who are defined as disabled in the Disability Discrimination Act and those who have special educational needs as defined by the Education Act 1996. The definition of SEN will include many, but not necessarily all, disabled children: a disabled child has special educational needs if they have a disability and need special educational provision to be made for them in order to be able to access the education which is available locally.

1. **Purpose and direction of Longbenton Community College’s scheme**

At Longbenton Community College we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled students, staff and all those using the college and receiving services from the college. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. Our admissions policy does not discriminate against disabled students. Achievements of disabled students will be monitored and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the college environment is as accessible as possible. We will not tolerate harassment of disabled people.

The college now has a Local Authority commissioned Additionally Resourced Provision for students with autism (The Melrose Centre); appropriate training/information is delivered to all staff and students within the college to ensure that we are an autistic-aware college.

It is the responsibility of the whole college community to implement this scheme in a manner which promotes the inclusive ethos of our school.

1. **The involvement of disabled students, staff, parents/carers and the local community in developing the scheme**

**A) Disabled Students**

We have a database of all of our disabled students.

We have continued to interview some individuals and groups of disabled students and asked them to identify barriers that affect them and to suggest ways that we can overcome these barriers. We have interviewed dyslexic, ASD mainstream students, alongside a student with physical disabilities. We also have ongoing feedback from parents during review meetings of statemented students.

Key issues identified by our students were**:**

Dyslexic students identified taking notes and homework down quickly and accurately as a problem. They have practised speed typing and note-taking and have arrangements to be given copies of notes made by teachers and other students.

Mainstream ASD students have identified several things that they found difficult to manage. Perceived and real bullying, during unstructured time, has been reduced by encouraging students to use “safe” places such as the peer mentoring room and the library. Some ASD students get lots of C3s. A visual guide on how not to get “consequences” has been written for this group. Getting help in class has been made easier for students reluctant to put up their hand, by using a traffic light system to get help.

From September 2011, we have kept a database and record of all students who have had a residential experience of one or more nights and examine what percentage of disabled students are included. In this way, we monitor that equal opportunities are provided. Data is collected on a termly basis.

**B) Disabled Staff**

We have a database of all staff who voluntarily identify themselves as disabled and record issues that affect them. An annual survey is made to update records.

**C) Disabled parents/carers**

The new parent information form invites suggestions of ways in which we can assist them to have effective contact with staff throughout the year. Following feedback from parents we have changed the format of parents‟ evenings. This makes parent teacher communication better, particularly when hearing impairment is an issue.

Open evenings have been condensed to West Wing which reduces the amount of walking required.

**D) Disabled members of the local community**

A questionnaire will be produced once per year by the Community Education Administrative Assistant to identify any barriers that exist and we will seek ways to remove them by making reasonable adjustments. Suggestions from the questionnaire will be reviewed annually.

Access to the site has been reviewed and special arrangements made for some groups and individuals.

**5. Gathering and Using Information**

Information gathered from a wide range of sources will be required in order for Longbenton Community College to identify the actions which need to be taken to promote disability equality. We will ensure that information promotes the disclosure of disabilities, is gathered in a sensitive manner, is kept confidential and assists in the further development of the scheme.

We will provide information on the definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act.

We explain to students, parents, staff, governors & community users why the information about disability is required.

Information gathered about disabled staff and students will be used to assess:

* the effect of our policies and practices on the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees
* the effect of our policies and practices on the educational opportunities available to, and achievements of, disabled students.

1. **Impact Assessment**

We recognise that many of the college’s policies, practices and procedures may have an impact on the participation and outcomes for disabled students, parents/carers, staff and members of the local community.

Where possible, data and information will be collated to show the impact of our policies on disabled people. Anecdotal evidence will also be used, e.g. informal feedback from a disabled person about the impact of a particular policy or procedure.

In our annual review of policies we will assess the impact of our particular policies on disabled people.

Following impact assessment of policies, practices, and procedures, reasonable adjustments will be made to promote equality of experience for disabled people.

1. **Publication and Reporting of Scheme**

The scheme will be:

* published on the college website;
* available in paper format to anyone on request;
* available on request in alternative formats including audio CD/tape, Braille, large print on request

We will report annually the progress we are making on promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people. Our annual report will include details of:

* Information gathered during the year
* how that information was used
* action points completed during the year and those that are ongoing.

We will ensure that disabled people are involved in the process.

1. **Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Operation of the Scheme**

The college governing body is responsible for overseeing the operation of the scheme. A report will be produced annually reviewing progress.

1. **Reviewing and Revision of the Scheme**

Our scheme will be reviewed and revised after a period of 3 years. Disabled people will be involved in the process. We shall respond to the issues identified through our impact assessment and those included in our annual reports.

The persons responsible for initiating the review of this scheme are I Little and

S Hayes.