

# Polisi Cydraddoldeb/ Equality Policy

Ysgol Bancyfelin, Ysgol  
Llangain ac Ysgol  
Llansteffan



## Legal Background

At a legislative level there are four main strands for disabled pupils :

- The SEN Framework (the Education Act 1996 and the SEN and Disability Act 2001)
- The Disability Discrimination Duties (Sections 28A-28C of the DDA 1995)
- The planning duties (Section 28D-28E of the DDA 1995)
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The SEN and Disability Act (2001) amended Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) by introducing new duties on LEAs and schools relating to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. From September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and LEAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions policies, education and associated services.

There are three main duties :

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- To prepare accessibility strategies (LEAs) and accessibility plans (schools) for increasing over time, the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils (this is the 'planning duty').

We as a school and Carmarthenshire LEA are required to plan for :

- Increasing access for disabled pupils to the curriculum
- Improving access to the school's physical environment (buildings and school grounds)
- Improving written information for disabled pupils

## SEN Pupils

The SEN Framework is designed to meet the special educational needs of individual children, some of whom may be disabled, who need provision that is additional to, or different from, what is normally available in schools maintained by the LEA. In general, children with statements must be educated in a mainstream school unless the parents do not want this or it will affect the provision of efficient education for other children. School must demonstrate that there are no reasonable steps they could take to prevent this happening.

The school needs to consider the requirements of current and future disabled pupils. This means that the school expects to make reasonable enquiries to find out whether children currently on roll, as well as those seeking admission, have a disability.

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the school.

In deciding whether a step is reasonable, schools may take into account the need to maintain;

- Academic standards
- Available resources

- The practicalities of making a particular adjustment
- The health and safety of the disabled pupils and others and the interests of others

### **Disability Equality Duty (DED)**

The 2005 Disability Act sets out the duty for schools to develop a 3 Year Disability Equality Scheme and to review this scheme and its impact on an annual basis.

All public bodies, schools, colleges and LEAs are subject to the Disability Equality Duty, and will be obliged to prepare and maintain a Disability Equality Scheme. This came into force in April 2007. In terms of the general duty schools need to look at everything they do on a day to day basis and consider how equality of opportunity for disabled pupils can be better promoted.

Schools and other public bodies have a general duty to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons related to their disabilities;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities even when that involves treating disabled persons more favourably;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

*This approach attempts to build on non discriminatory services rather than relying on individual people enforcing their rights.*

### **Code of Practice on the Disability Equality Duty (The 'DED Code')**

The DED Code says that schools and other public bodies must take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even if that means treating them more favourably than others.

Schools must examine the way they employ and provide services to identify any patterns of systematic discrimination. They must then take proactive and proportionate measures.

The Code says that schools must build on their existing responsibilities in the DDA by reviewing 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, parents and disabled people in general in all aspects of school life.

### **Definition of Disability**

Schools should not automatically consider pupils with a disability to have special educational needs, as can be seen below.

The DDA definition states that 'a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long term can be interpreted as over a year.

It is estimated that 7% of the population is disabled.

Pupils falling within the definition of disabled will have a wide range of needs and requirements including:

Autism Spectrum Disorders(ASD), perception of the risk of physical danger, mobility impairment, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, ability to lift, carry or move day to day objects, continence, speech, hearing, sight, learning disabilities - memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand, sensory impairment, ADHD, disfigurement, mental health conditions, epilepsy, AIDS, HIV, MS, asthma, progressive/degenerative conditions.

Schools must make "reasonable adjustments" for disabled pupils in all aspects of school life to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage i.e. discriminating against them.

## **Disability Equality Statement**

### **Preamble**

This Disability Equality Statement is our first statement of intent and may be modified in the light of monitoring and evaluation and data collection during the 3-year life of this statement.

### **Introduction**

Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin, Llangain and Llansteffan is committed to promoting equality for all. This statement represents the response of the Governing Body to its duties to promote equality for disabled people.

### **The Involvement of Disabled People**

We are committed to the involvement of disabled people in the development of this statement. The following steps have been taken to secure this involvement:

- Local organisations for disabled people will be approached for their comments;
- Parents of disabled children attending the school will be asked to contribute;
- Union representatives will be asked for their views;
- The school has had regard to the Local Authority protocol; and
- The School Council will be asked to comment on the treatment of disabled pupils by staff and their fellow pupils in school.

### **Impact Assessment**

We are aware that any statement must be backed up by action. In this initial stage we will:

- During the period that this statement remains in force (3 years) we will review policies and practices on a rolling programme in respect of their effect on promoting disability equality;
- We will collect and analyse relevant statistical information (see below);
- We will collect qualitative information on the confidence and enjoyment of disabled people (see below);
- We will review advertising with a view to making it more encouraging to disabled people;
- We will examine information for parents and transfer induction for children with a view to making it more encouraging for children;
- We will make appropriate reports (see below);
- We will introduce an equality assessment on new developments; and

- While the numbers of disabled people in a relatively small organisation make targets impossible to set with any validity, we will aim to increase over time the number of disabled people in our employment and attending the school.

### **Information**

We recognise the importance of collecting, analysing and acting upon information, if we are to discharge our equality duty. Accordingly we will collect the following information:

- Data on the employment of disabled people. Disability monitoring. It is recognised that the number of disabled employees is likely to be statistically small in a small workforce and that it will be important to look at trends rather than at the year-on-year fluctuations;
- Qualitative information from disabled employees or would-be employees. This will include an exit questionnaire;
- Performance data for disabled children;
- Disciplinary data for disabled children; and
- Qualitative and quantitative information on the effect of interventions in regard to disabled children.

### **Use of Information**

- The information collected will be reported to the appropriate Governors' Committees;
- A summative report will be made to Governors annually;
- It will be taken into account in decisions regarding staffing, curriculum and premises development; and
- It will form part of the discussion with Subject Leaders on their annual Development Plan and in the drawing up of the school's annual Self Evaluation and Improvement Plan.

### **Actions Taken**

The actions that the school has taken so far in regard to disability equality are that it has:

Researched the school's responsibilities in relation to disability.

Attended awareness training events organised for Headteachers by the LEA.

Briefed the Governing body in relation to its duties.

Asked the LEA to carry out an accessibility survey.

Undertaken to work with our family of schools and other families of schools within Carmarthenshire to receive focussed advice and support on developing policies for disabled groups other than those on the autistic spectrum.

Made arrangements to prepare an action plan for 2007-2010.

### **Our main priorities in our accessibility plan**

#### **The main priorities in the school's plan-**

- a. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum.**

In the terms of the guidance in Circular No.15/2004, the curriculum covers teaching and learning and wider provision embracing after school clubs; leisure, sporting and cultural activities; and school trips. Planning for improved access to the curriculum should include consideration of school and classroom organisation and support, timetabling, curriculum options, the deployment of staff and staff information and training.

We recognize that curriculum development work is very time intensive. We are therefore planning the developments outlined below over the lifetime of the plan. We aim to focus on key areas of the curriculum, namely:-

- Access for all to the new Foundation Stage Curriculum
- Access for all to the new Key Stage 2 Curriculum
- Continue to develop approaches to the differentiation of the curriculum to enable increased access for pupils with disabilities.
- Identify all pupils and known prospective pupils who face barriers to learning and full participation. early identification of the needs of any new pupils with disabilities is an important part of this plan.
- Develop curriculum audits which review patterns of achievement and participation by disabled pupils in different areas of the curriculum and planning and delivering the curriculum.
- Audit staff training needs in relation to increasing participation in the curriculum and use outside agencies for support, advice and training in order that TAs and teachers can be advised effectively.

***Each of which will be the subject of a detailed action plan.***

These developments reflect our wider school improvement priorities and will be led by those with the relevant specialist curricular expertise, including

- The School's Management Team
- The School Improvement Officer
- Curriculum Coordinators

We are drawing upon a range of external partners to assist us in our approach namely: -

- Members of area teams
  - Advisers
  - Advisory teachers
  - Educational psychologists
  - Education Welfare Officers
  - Learning Support Officers

**Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services.**

The planning duty includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and provision of physical aids to access education.

The physical environment includes steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, heating, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs, interior surfaces, room décor and furniture.

Improvements to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops, communication aids, well designed (passive) room acoustics and way-finding systems.

Improvements can also be made through rearranging room space, removing obstructions from walkways, changing the layout of classrooms, providing designated storage space or reallocating rooms to particular subject specialisms.

Physical aids to access education include ICT equipment, desks, chairs, writing equipment, science equipment, etc. There is a distinction between aids provided under the SEN framework, which are allocated for individual pupils, and aids or adaptations provided under the planning duty which relates to the pupil population (and future population) or the school.

We acknowledge that we cannot do everything at once and so we are focussing upon meeting the accessibility needs of those pupils already in the school and those likely to come here over the next three years.

We recognise that the physical environment of our school impacts differently upon different groups of disabled pupils. We have set out to prioritise our approach to reflect the needs of our current and future pupils.

We can make low key adaptations from our own delegated budget including small improvements and we bid for additional funding within the Disability Access Fund linked to the local authority's Modernising Education Programme.

Our priorities:

- Ensure an access audit has been completed and incorporate the outcome into school planning.
- Continue to provide specialist aids/equipment to individual pupils within the terms of the agreement described above.
- Ensure training is made available to the Governors and school staff as necessary to raise awareness of school responsibilities and opportunities for improvement.
- Continue to maintain up-to-date information about the number of children and young people with disabilities in the school, or anticipated to be attending in the future.
- Other physical changes will be on-going as and when the school learns of the needs of any disabled children who might attend in the future.

The school has set the following priorities for physical improvements to increase access:

Ensure that all corridors are clear and free obstructions.

Ensuring that whatever mobility/accessibility problems new pupils have can be quickly and effectively managed

Ensuring that play areas are accessible for pupils who are wheelchair users.

Improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled- this section covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its pupils available to disabled pupils. Information might include items such as handouts, timetables, text books or information about school events.

Alternative formats for the provision of information might include: large print, audio tape, Braille, a recognised symbol system, the use of ICT and the provision of information orally, through lip reading or in sign language.

Information must be provided within a reasonable time frame, i.e. to be of proper use for the pupil. For example, a reasonable time frame for the provision of a handout needed during a lesson would be the start of the lesson.

In practice, it is anticipated that the majority of pupils requiring information to be provided in a different format will already have had their needs identified through the school's and/or the LEA's SEN identification processes.

If at any time we became aware of the need for written information to be produced for any other audience, we undertake that we would enlist the support of outside agencies that could assist us.

We aim to provide information in accessible formats e.g.:-

- Providing simplified language versions for pupils with learning difficulties.
- Offering picture/symbol systems for pupils with language and communication difficulties.
- Using large print formats for pupils who experience difficulties with standard prints.
- Providing audio taped instructions for some pupils.

We appreciate that some pupils require specialised formats e.g. Braille. Where this is the case we will link closely with the Carmarthenshire's Sensory Impaired Service to secure this format.

The school will:

- raise awareness amongst staff about the requirements to provide information in alternative formats if required.
- maintain up-to-date information on pupils' needs for the provision of information in alternative formats and ensure it is shared amongst staff.
- collect and share examples of good practice amongst staff.
- review and audit the school's approach to the provision of written information in general to establish if the format could be improved routinely and in general to improve accessibility.
- seek specialist advice and support in those cases which lie beyond the school's immediate expertise.

The school has set the following priorities for providing information for disabled pupils

- To continually monitor the success of our written communications.
- To provide amended/altered information available as and when needed.

### **Our management, co-ordination and implementation process**

The governing body takes responsibility for the school accessibility plan and sets a clear direction for it. We will monitor the progress of our plan annually and review and revise it every three years.

We will ensure that disabled pupils, their parents and carers, the staff, visiting professionals, and those from the voluntary sector can contribute to our review.

In terms of the evaluation of our plan and its impact we will invite colleagues from the local authority's Area Team to support us in the evaluation of our plan and play the role of the critical friend offering objective feedback. We will expressly draw upon the views of the key stakeholders in our plan and we will link this with our school performance data.

Clearly the Accessibility Plan does not stand alone, it is inextricably linked with our wider planning processes, namely our:-

School improvement plan

CPD plan

Inclusion policy

Asset Management policy

Health and Safety policy

We recognise the need to ensure our plan takes account of the work of other services particularly Health. In terms of the detailed implementation of our plan we have set out this in a planning format on the next pages.

### **Making our plan available**

- We will make our plan available to anyone on request
- In striving to make our plan accessible we have tried to use plain language that is jargon free.

### **Revision**

The policy will be revised on an annual basis. Consultations will be made with all relevant parties during the review and other documentation, policies and procedures linked with this policy will also be reviewed and changed when appropriate.

