

## Accessibility Policy

### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide outstanding services of support and intervention to remove barriers and provide learners with the tools to flourish academically and socially in the school, wider community and for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

A highly skilled and committed team will ensure students are self-aware, self-reflective, able to self-manage and be motivated to achieve their best as independent, resilient people.

This work will be based on core values of inclusiveness, mutual respect, participation, entitlement, positivity, integrity, compassion, partnership and professionalism.

### AIMS

At Litherland High School we aim to maximise the potential of all students by responding to diverse needs, reducing barriers to learning and increasing participation using a coordinated response.

Through intervention we aim to raise attainment, encourage aspiration and improve emotional health and well-being.

The 4Ps of inclusive education are:

- \* Protection
- \* Presence
- \* Participation
- \* Progress

At Litherland High School we assess students, identifying needs, map intervention using our support team and review the impact of the work.

We have a skilled team of support workers – Teaching Assistants and Behaviour and Welfare Specialists.

We offer support and targeted intervention for literacy, numeracy, dyslexia, EAL, autism, speech and language, hearing impairment, visual impairment, medical issues, emotional and social needs, ADHD and behaviour modification.

### Rationale:

Litherland High School is committed to providing an appropriate and high quality education to all the young people it serves. We believe that all young people, including those identified as having SEND, have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them and enables them to be fully included in all aspects of school life.

Our school aims to provide an environment in which individuals are respected and encouraged to reach their full potential. The school is committed to providing equal access for all students to the broad and balanced curriculum to which they are entitled. Students with SEND, at times, require a more specialised programme than the majority of students of the same age, in part or all of their school work. We place a high priority on the need to provide the best possible education for such students, and no less than for students who display no learning difficulties or other problems.

**Values:**

We at Litherland High School are committed to meeting the Special Educational Needs of students and ensuring that they make maximum progress. We believe that all students:

- \* are equal
- \* are able to make a valuable contribution to the life of the school
- \* should have equal educational opportunities
- \* be educated in a climate of high expectation, co-operation and collaboration
- \* should be integrated and participate fully in school life
- \* have the right to be treated with sensitivity, consideration and respect in a safe environment.

We believe that all teachers:

- \* Have a responsibility to identify, respond and ensure high quality provision in the education and welfare of all students with Special Educational Needs to overcome barriers to learning, provide suitable learning challenges and accommodate a diversity of student need.

# DISABILITY EQUALITY POLICY/ ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## 1. Purpose of this Policy and Accessibility Plan

At Litherland High School we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel confident about disclosing their disabilities in the knowledge that they will receive a positive and supportive response which facilitates their full participation in the range of activities offered by the school.

At Litherland High School we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn in, work in, and visit our community.

## 2. The Disability Equality Duty (DED)

### Definition of Disability

**The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995** defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

**The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001** extended the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 to cover education. Since September 2002 the school's Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled students under Part 4 of the DDA, which are:

I. Not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability

II. To make reasonable adjustments for disabled students to ensure that they are not at a substantial disadvantage, and written information (documented in an Accessibility Plan).

To plan to increase access to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information (documented in an Accessibility Plan). The Disability Discrimination Act of 2005 has extended the definition of disability to include people with a hearing or visual impairment, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, mental health issues and incontinence. People with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autistic spectrum disorder, Down's Syndrome and hydrocephalus are included. Medical conditions such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, sickle cell anaemia and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) are deemed disabilities. Facial disfigurement, severe dyslexia, gross obesity and diagnosed eating disorders are all included. If a person has been disabled in the past (for example, those who have recovered from cancer, or people with a history of mental illness), then they are still covered by the legislation for the rest of their life.

### 3. The Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 2005 places a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard to the following when carrying out their functions as employers, as providers of education and associated services and as providers of services to the wider community:

- \* Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- \* Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- \* Eliminating harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disability
- \* Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- \* Encouraging participation in public life by disabled persons
- \* Taking steps to take account of disabled persons disabilities even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than their non- disabled peers

This general duty is also known as the Disability Equality Duty (DED).

A specific duty under the 2005 legislation requires all schools to produce a Disability Equality Scheme and an associated action plan covering a three year cycle.

### 4. Unlawful Discrimination

Litherland High School will ensure that discrimination is avoided in:

- \* the selection, appointment and promotion arrangements for staff;
- \* staff conditions of service;
- \* staff training;
- \* the arrangements for determining student admission;
- \* the terms on which admission is offered;
- \* refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an admission application;
- \* provision of education or associated services (including educational visits, extra-curricular activities and youth service activities);
- \* exclusions

### 5. Students

Litherland High School fully supports the vision of Sefton Children's Services namely:

\* We believe that all children and young people have the right to be healthy, happy and safe; to be loved, valued and respected; and to have high aspirations for their future.

\* Inclusion is the process of taking necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life.

Every effort will be made to ensure that '**reasonable adjustments**' are made to accommodate disabled students and young people, while bearing in mind the interests of other students and young people. The school is required to make under the terms of SENDA 2001;

\* Improvements in access to the curriculum for disabled students and young people;

- \* Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services (e.g. extra – curricular activities); and
  - \* Improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled students and young people
  - \* There is an additional requirement for schools to explore whether or not students with behavioural issues may or may not have an underlying disability leading to this. For example, the following can be underlying reasons for poor behaviour; mental illness, mental health problems, learning difficulties, dyslexia, diabetes, epilepsy.
  - \* The school will take into account all these requirements when considering the inclusion and treatment of disabled students in the school.
- (N.B. Behaviour difficulties arising from social or domestic circumstances are not covered by the Act).*

## **6. Students - Education and Associated Services**

The school will examine each individual case to determine the best adjustments that can be made to accommodate every individual's needs.

The school aims to fulfil the requirements of the legislation to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students and young people with disabilities, to enable them to have access as far as is reasonably practicable to the school premises, facilities, curriculum and associated services.

All relevant information is recorded on the individual's school record (staff or student).

A review will be held at least annually as part of the annual Performance Management programme in the case of staff, or as part of the whole school review process and the annual special needs review in the case of students.

Risk assessments will be carried out on behalf of disabled staff, students and visitors on an annual basis, and as circumstances change.

These risk assessments will be the responsibility of;

- \* the line manager in the case of a new member of staff
- \* the Head of Year with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCO) or delegated staff member as appropriate for students
- \* the member of staff that the visitor has come to see or whom they will be working with.

## **7. Action on Transfer into the School**

At transfer to Litherland High School, additional liaison time is allocated for disabled students and their families to ensure that the student's educational needs and the school's requirements are fully understood by staff at the feeder school, parents/carers, and student, and to ensure that there is a smooth transition.

## **8. Achievements of Disabled Students**

Records are kept of all students' achievements including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or a disability. Any individual feedback from students, parents or carers regarding specific actions are recorded on the student's file. Achievements of all students are valued at Litherland High School whether they are of an academic, social or spiritual value.

## **9. Educational Opportunities available to Disabled Students**

- \* Alternative provision to access to all areas of curriculum teaching will be put in place if a student is physically unable to go to class.
- \* Wherever possible an alternative location will be found off site if specific teaching requirements cannot be accessed at Litherland High School.
- \* We will endeavour to ensure that all students have equal access to educational visits/trips.

- \* All students have the right to attend all trips and residential visits. This will be achieved through careful consultation with parents/carers, planning, funding and adequate manning of visits.
- \* In all teaching and learning activities a full range of teaching and learning styles will be employed to ensure that no student is excluded from learning.
- \* Additional careers guidance will be offered in order that the disabled student has the same opportunity to access careers advice.
- \* Access arrangements will allow equal access to examinations, so that students can fulfil their potential.
- \* Students will be entered for the level of examination which is appropriate for their level of ability.

### **10. Sensory Support for Students**

- \* The school will make provision to enable students with sensory support needs to access the full curriculum, for instance by providing documents in alternative formats, and by considering classroom seating and accommodation arrangements. Litherland High School provides identified sensory support items where needed and has a designated area within the school where students are able to regulate when necessary.
- \* Children's Services Sensory Support visits the school to provide advice and assistance in cases where sensory support is needed.

### **11. Parents with Disabilities**

- \* The school will meet the needs of parents and carers with disabilities wherever possible, for instance by providing documentation in alternative formats if requested.
- \* Meetings with parents will be generally be held on the ground floor, or parents can use the lift, or request to go to one room only to learn of their child's progress in an environment with less background noise.
- \* Parents may also request, in advance, to have a meeting with a teacher in one classroom in using the hearing loop installed.

### **12. Involvement of people with additional needs in developing the policy**

As we look to develop the Disability Equality Policy, we will continue to consult with:

- \* the parents/carers of disabled students who would like to come to Litherland High School, to identify particular needs and to ensure that, where possible, these are met;
- \* the students themselves to ensure that all of their needs are being met;
- \* Sefton Council in order to ensure that as facilities are developed they meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act;
- \* the Health and Safety Executive in order to ensure that any modification of the buildings does not contravene legislation to protect any students, staff, or visitors to the school.

We will continue to use these mechanisms for consultation in the future but will also seek to widen the spectrum of those consulted, specifically:

- \* through encouraging disabled students to have representation on the School Council.
- \* through setting up a focus group to collect and collate the views of disabled members of our community.

### **13. Information Gathering**

We regard the following as examples of the strengths of the school in promoting equality for individuals with additional needs:

- \* Academic mentoring
- \* Timetabling of students to accessible classrooms where required
- \* Sensitivity with which school address the issue
- \* Provision of lifts

We recognise the following amongst areas of weakness in promoting disability equality:

- \* The school's identification and knowledge of disabled parents/carers

Consultations with Governors, staff, students, parents and carers have informed our Accessibility Plan, which follows this policy document.

### **14. Recruitment, Development and Retention of Disabled Employees**

#### **i. Recruitment of Staff**

The school follows Sefton Council procedures in the recruitment of teaching and support staff to ensure equality of opportunity.

The application form used specifically requests disclosure of disability, information which is then recorded within school on appointment. This is used to inform suitable provision for the successful applicant.

#### **ii. Development of staff**

The school will analyse the information in respect of disabled staff:

- \* in teaching, teaching support, administrative support and site support roles;
- \* at all levels of seniority in the school;
- \* as permanent or temporary members of staff, full-time or part-time or casual staff;
- \* in training and professional development opportunities
- \* in disciplinary and capability procedures;
- \* in harassment and bullying procedures;
- \* as contract staff for example: contract cleaners and agency supply teachers;
- \* among those who take sick leave
- \* among those leaving the profession early

The development needs of disabled staff will be discussed with the member of staff on a request; often these discussions occur on an informal basis, but these can be formalised on request.

Wherever possible the timetable will be adjusted to reflect the needs of disabled members of staff. Other appropriate adjustments may be made as agreed between the member of staff, their Line Manager and the Leadership Team.

Within the constraints of financial resources the school aims to make adjustments to the premises to enable the member of staff to act effectively.

The school values the wellbeing of all members of staff. Litherland High School High School has signed up with Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council and, where a member of staff is disabled or has additional needs, accesses Occupational Health services at an early stage. The school actively supports and contributes to any Access to Work resources that are recommended as a result of a referral to Occupational Health.

The annual revision of the Disability Equality Scheme will involve an analysis of whether appropriate adjustments are being made for staff with disabilities. Support provided to enable disabled staff to return to work or continue in service will also be analysed at annual review.

### iii. Retention of staff

Each member of staff leaving school will be invited to complete an exit survey evaluating the extent to which the school has met their needs and whether it is a disabled friendly place to work which encourages diversity in its workplace.

We will continue to collate data and evidence and to liaise with the Local Authority around the collection of information to ensure that policies and practices meet the legal responsibilities of the Disability Equality Duty.

The information gathered indicates that there were no applications from registered disabled people for positions at the school in the 2014/15 academic year.

## **15. School Environment**

We are continuing to make reasonable adjustments to make our site as accessible as possible, whilst recognising that it is a large, multi-floored building that has two blocks which together comprise the fabric of the school. Following consultation the Accessibility Plan has been drawn up to drive on-going improvement (see below).

## **16. School Facility Lettings**

Litherland High School High School makes facilities and resources available on a lettings basis to all members of the community. There is a managed system of hiring facilities and only LITHERLAND HIGH SCHOOL buildings with 100% DDA access are available to hirers. The responsibility for allocating groups to suitable spaces lies with the school's lettings company.

## **17. Contractors and Procurement**

Contractors and procurements from Sefton MBC's approved lists are covered by the Council's Disability Equality Scheme.

## **18. Discrimination in Admissions**

The Governing Body ensures that disabled students, young people and adult students are not discriminated against:

- \* through the criteria determined for admission to the school, or
- \* by refusing an application from a disabled person for admission to the school, based on their disability

## **19. Off-site Activities**

Litherland High School High School will ensure as far as reasonably practicable that students, young people and staff with disabilities are given access to off-site activities organised by the school. This responsibility lies with the officer responsible for Educational Visits (the Assistant Principal).

## **20. Eliminating Harassment and Bullying**

Litherland High School High School strives to achieve a positive, encouraging atmosphere conducive to nurturing positive attitudes towards all people with disability of any sort.

Should incidents of bullying/harassment occur they will be dealt with in line with the sanctions set out in the Behaviour for Learning Policy / Anti Bullying Policy. Details of bullying incidents involving disabled students are to be found on the central spread sheet with Student Support. Bullying incidents are recorded and categorised as being racist, sexist, and homophobic or based on a student's additional needs.

The Governing Body will take positive action against any employees, students or other person (visitors / volunteers) who are involved in the harassment of another employee, student or other person. All members of the school community i.e. employees, students or others have a duty not to harass others on the ground of their disability (or any other grounds recognized by the law), and to report instances of harassment to the Principal (or in the case of harassment by the Principal, to the Chair of the Governing Body).

## **21. Membership of the Governing Body**

All nominations received to become a member of the Governing Body of Litherland High School High School are treated equally. Disabled representatives are welcome and proceedings are made accessible. Parent Governors are available to parents and their contact details may be obtained from the Clerk to the Governors.

## **22. Liaison with Parents**

The governors will make available to parents/carers information relating to:

- \* the Accessibility Plan;
- \* how the school helps students with disability gain access to the curriculum; what the school does to ensure fair treatment for disabled students.

Litherland High School High School will continue to ensure close liaison with families of all students with disability through the provision of designated staff (e.g. SENDCo, appropriate Teaching Assistants, Assistant Principal (Behaviour, Safety and Inclusion), Heads of Year and Form Tutors. Wherever possible, information for home will be provided in different formats if requested.

## **23. Training**

Appropriate training for staff, students and young people to further understanding and implementation of the DDA and SENDA will be provided. The SENCO and Disability Co-ordinator are responsible for organising whole school training on DDA and SENDA issues.

Staff working with students with individual needs will have access to suitable and relevant training as necessary.

Staff will be given, as relevant, advice from external agencies regarding the learning needs of individual students (for example the Sensory Support Service).

## **24. Responsibilities**

### **i. Governing Body Responsibilities**

The Governing Body ensuring that disabled people are not treated less favourably in the following aspects as relevant:

- \* accessibility to the premises and facilities;
- \* accessibility to the curriculum;
- \* accessibility of associated educational services;
- \* training of staff and the education of students

The Governing Body will:

- \* oversee the implementation of all the school's policies and practices including the area of Disability, Equality and Inclusion;
- \* review what reasonable adjustments are being made and could be made;
- \* consider the school's Accessibility Plan; and
- \* review the Plan annually.

The Governing Body is also responsible for the appointment of a SEN link governor. The link governor covers SEN provision, and has additional responsibilities in overseeing the implementation, review & monitoring and future development of this policy and Accessibility Plan.

### **ii. Principal Responsibilities**

The Principal will:

- \* along with the Governing Body ensure the implementation of the Scheme
- \* report progress as required to the Governing Body
- \* ensure that the Accessibility Plan has been reviewed periodically and updated annually, or as necessary, and report progress to the governing body;
- \* ensure that regular liaison with parents/carers of students with additional needs takes place.

### **iii. Leadership Team Responsibilities comprise**

- \* The positive promotion and implementation of the policy (the Assistant Principal Behaviour, Safety and Inclusion)
- \* Specific staff with responsibility for various aspects of the policy (see Accessibility Plan for details)
- \* The member of staff with responsibility for staff training and staff induction (the Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning)

### **iv. SENCO Responsibilities**

- \* To provide access to regular relevant training opportunities & updates
- \* Undertake SEN annual reviews and reporting, in addition to on-going and regular monitoring

v. Staff with responsibilities (e.g. Heads of Year)

- \* Implementation of the policy / scheme and reporting, recording as appropriate.
- \* Staff development within their area

vi. Teaching and Support Staff Responsibilities

- \* Familiarity with the policy / scheme and assist in its implementation
- \* Undertake training as relevant

vii. Expectations of Students

- \* To treat disabled people as favourably as others, and to and apply the school code of conduct at all times.

## **25. Accessibility Plan**

Our Accessibility Plan follows the local authority's guidelines and aims to:

- \* increase the extent to which disabled students and young people can participate in the school curriculum;
- \* improve the physical environment of the school in order to enable disabled students and young people to take advantage of education and associated services;
- \* enable disabled staff to have reasonable access to premises and facilities that they need for their contracted duties;
- \* ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable the needs of disabled visitors to the site are taken into account.

Action already taken includes

- \* Provision of lift access.
- \* Changes to timetable to ensure accessibility.
- \* Provision of resources in enlarged print and a dyslexia-friendly approach to presenting resources strategy is implemented by staff as standard.

## **26. Impact Assessment**

The Assistant Principal (Behaviour, Safety and Inclusion) is responsible for monitoring the impact of the policy and Accessibility Plan, and reporting to the Governors Pastoral and Admissions Committee on an annual basis.

## **27. Responsible Persons**

- \* Senior Member of Staff Responsible Assistant Principal (Behaviour, Safety and Inclusion)
- \* Designated Member of Staff (SENDSCO)
- \* SEN link Governor

## **28. Reviewing /Monitoring**

The action plan will be reviewed and monitored by the School Leadership Team and Governors annually.

This Disability Equality policy will be reviewed and published on the school's website each year and will be revised every three years.

Checklist for school Leadership Team and Governors

- \* Is information collected on disability with regards to both students and staff? Is this information used to improve the provision of services?
- \* Is student achievement monitored by disability? Are there trends or patterns in data that require additional action?
- \* Are disabled students encouraged to participate in school life?
- \* Is bullying and harassment of disabled students and staff monitored and is this information used to make a difference?
- \* Is the school environment as accessible as possible to students, staff and visitors to the school? Are Parents' Evenings and other events which parent or carers attend held in an accessible part of the school?
- \* Is information available to parents, visitors, students and staff in formats which are accessible if required?
- \* Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?

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