

Churchdown School Academy



Accessibility Policy

Governors' Policy Document 2016

Background

At Churchdown School, we have created an inclusive community in which each person is respected and recognised as of equal value. We aim to ensure that everyone remains safe and stays healthy, whilst at the same time enjoys and achieves and makes a positive contribution to the wellbeing of the school community.

We are committed to the care and well-being of all students so that they may work and learn in a safe, secure environment. In all aspects of the school, the stakeholders (governors, staff, students, parents and the wider community) are committed to working together to ensure that the school community remains true to the equal value principle underpinning its policies.

Through a series of inter-related policies and procedural guidelines we support disability equality in all aspects of school life for students, staff and visitors. All new policies and protocols are carefully examined to ensure access and equality in diversity.

Equal Value Principle

Everyone at Churchdown School has equal value. The policy of equality, of 'opportunity in diversity', is based on the principle of respect for the individual. The school is an integrated whole, inclusive of the students with physical or sensory impairments, communication, learning, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. It addresses each person's unique, intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional or social needs.

All members of the school community work together to create an atmosphere in which each member can grow and flourish regardless gender, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other relevant distinction. Positive interpersonal relationships are fostered in a climate of high expectations and respect for individual achievement. Every area of school life reflects this attention to individual needs and rights, as all school policies are founded on these basic principles, which are embodied in the school aims and values.

Students have full and open access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to a range of extra-curricular experiences. Detailed attention is given to resourcing and the development of an appropriate environment to meet the needs of individual students and groups within the school community. The language used in the school community, spoken or written, fosters a positive attitude to each person whatever her/his race, class, colour, creed, sex, sexuality, age or ability.

Requirements on Schools

The Disability Equality Duty (2006) requires schools to be proactive in promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination, having regard to Part 5A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This has now been superseded by The Equality Act of 2010.

Statement of Intent

Churchdown School continues to develop its ability to provide an inclusive, accessible environment for students, staff, parents and members of the local community. It aims to meet the five outcomes of the Children Act (2004) and has regard to the general duty to:

- promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate disability-related harassment
- promote positive attitudes to people with disabilities
- encourage the participation of people with disabilities

Regularly updated action plans ensure that improvements are appropriately prioritised.

Role of Key Personnel

Governors

The Governing Body monitor and review the SEND policy and the Accessibility Plan on a regular basis, which must be at least annually. They ensure the School's inclusion of students with disabilities meets all aspects of the law.

The School Leadership Team

The Headteacher and other members of the School Leadership Team ensure that all policies, practices, protocols and provision have regard to the Disability Equality Duty and the Equality Act of 2010, which extends protection from discrimination to people with what are termed, 'protected characteristics' in almost every area of life. The Headteacher and Head of SEN are responsible for ensuring the implementation of all policies and the full development of a strong ethos of inclusion, within all aspects of the life of the school.

All Staff

It is the duty of all staff and everyone working in the school to implement the policies and continue to develop inclusive practices.

Complaints

Parents and staff have access to the school's Complaints Procedures. Students may go through their tutors, company team or through other students, such as the Student Leadership Team form representatives etc.

The Accessibility Plan

1. This plan addresses the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and refers to individuals who are disabled (both current and prospective) in a wide sense, including those with special educational needs, and with temporary or permanent physical disability. It also deals with access issues for disabled staff and visitors.
2. Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):
"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."
3. The SEN and Disability Act (2001) extended the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body has 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, where such improvement to access has been identified.

4. Should increase access be identified, then the school will produce an Accessibility Policy that identifies the action the schools intends to take over a three year period to increase access for those with a disability in three key areas. This will be published and evaluated annually. The three areas are:
 - 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.

5. In addition, the Disability Equality Duty (2006) requires all schools to:
 - Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA.
 - Eliminate harassment of those with a disability.
 - Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
 - Encourage participation by disabled individuals.
 - Take steps to take account of disabilities even if this involves treating disabled persons more favourably.

6. This duty requires schools to:
 - Involve those with a disability in producing a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and Action Plan.
 - Publish the DES/Action Plan.
 - Demonstrate they have taken action identified to achieve outcomes.
 - Report on progress, review and revise the DES annually.

7. This plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the SEND and Disability Act 2011 (SENDA). It draws on the guidance set out in "Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to school for disabled pupils", issued by DfES in July 2002. At all times the School will also be equally aware of the needs of disabled staff, parents and visitors.

8. Principles:
 - Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the school's aims, equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the school's SEND policy.

9. Key Objectives:
 - To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for pupils and prospective pupils with a disability.
 - To provide a caring and friendly environment.
 - To provide resources that meets the needs of the individual student and supports them towards developing independence.
 - To promote an understanding of disabilities throughout the school and an awareness of the needs of students with a disability.

Admission

Churchdown School is an inclusive and caring school. Students with an EHCP or Statement of Special Education Needs can apply for a place at Churchdown School. The school has a well-established process of transition for student from primary schools into secondary as part of the wider transition process.

Temporary and Permanent Needs of Students

Existing and emerging health needs of existing students are closely monitored and arrangements for individualised support are developed in consultation with their parents and medical or other appropriate professionals. Short term mobility needs are considered and guidance and help given as appropriate.

Staff Recruitment and the Needs of Existing Staff

Staff recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. This is in line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy which specifically states that the Governors are equal opportunities employers and are committed to ensuring that, within the framework of the law, the school is free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of gender (incl. gender reassignment), colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, marital status, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other relevant distinction.

The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have, or have had, a temporary or permanent disability will be reviewed regularly to ensure that whatever reasonable adjustments are possible are made to allow them to enter into, or remain in, school employment. Where new health needs are identified for existing staff, the appropriate staff are informed and every effort is made to support the staff member and promote their safety and well-being. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff can participate fully. Short term mobility needs are considered and, where necessary or appropriate, help and guidance will be given.

Education

The school provides all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles; and endorses the key principles in the National curriculum framework, which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to students' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

Staff work hard to meet the needs of all students with regards to accessing the curriculum and are supported by the Senior Leadership Team all aspects of school life. Each student is viewed as an individual, supported in their progress towards as fully as independent and achieving future, as possible.