

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### Legal Status:

- Prepared with regard to the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, Children's Act 1989 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE and Department for Health: 2014)
- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations
- The Technical Guidance Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils: Guidance for Schools in England (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2015)

### Applies to:

- the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), breakfast club, after school care, and all other activities provided by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours;
- This policy applies to the whole school including all staff (teaching and non-teaching), students on placement, the Proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

### Plumtree School Strategy:

Plumtree School strategy is to address and comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, as updated Jan 2022.

### Availability:

This policy is made available to parents, staff and pupils in the following ways: via the School website [www.plumtreeschool.co.uk](http://www.plumtreeschool.co.uk) and on request, a copy may be obtained from the Office.

### Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head Teacher to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. A particular focus will be given during the monitoring of the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion) and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and the policy will be reviewed in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring.
- The Proprietors undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require. If changes are required, the school will implement them. Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with *The Data Protection Act 1998*.

Signed:  
Phil Simpson,  
Head Teacher

Date: May 2025

### Single Equalities Policy

#### Aims

The policy exists in order to ensure that all the provisions of relevant equality laws, and the recommendations of associated codes of practice, are fully observed throughout all areas of Plumtree School. Our duties under the Equality Act 2010 include dealing with issues related to pupils with special educational needs/disabilities, and making reasonable adjustments for these pupils. This has implications for the School's Admission Policy. We aim to create and protect a learning environment free from any forms of discrimination, victimisation or harassment. Plumtree School celebrates every individual, supporting them to meet their full potential, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 requires Plumtree School to have an Accessibility Plan, in writing, which is kept over a prescribed period (currently 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024).

It is:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;

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- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school, and
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled. The delivery must be within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

The Accessibility Plan must be implemented by the Proprietor, who must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementing the plan. The plan must be kept under review during the period, and, if necessary, revised.

### **Definition of Disability**

"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."

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy**

Plumtree School SEND Policy includes:

- an explanation of how the individual needs of all children will be met (including how children who are disabled or have special educational needs (SEN) will be included, valued and supported, and how reasonable adjustments will be made for them);
- the name of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO);
- arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices that promote and value diversity and difference;
- how inappropriate attitudes and practices are challenged; and
- how the provision encourages children to value and respect others.

### **Guiding Principles**

Plumtree School is committed to a policy of social justice in respect of all its members. This means that rather give everyone the same, we ensure that we look at the individual and give them what they need. To this end, we take steps to ensure that pupils appreciate racial and cultural diversity, and avoid and resist racism. Fundamental to its life as a school community is the belief that all individuals, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation are of equal value. In order to ensure that our school community is one in which these values flourish, Plumtree School is guided by the following principles in relation to Equality. Personal, Social, Health, Economic education (PSHE), including Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural (SMSC) Education, instructs all aspects of school life.

#### **Principle 1**

##### **All learners are valued, and their contributions recognised.**

Learners are supported and encouraged to maximise their potential and to contribute fully in all areas of school life. Children's success and efforts are rewarded by the praise from teachers as well as team points and star awards in assemblies. All children are given the opportunity to share their successes through the opportunity to talk in class or through show and tell sessions. Sport and Music play a significant role in our school and children are recognised for their efforts through our Music Festival, Sports Day and other sporting and music events. We aim to give every pupil a sense of achievement and fulfilment regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, national origin, national status, sex, gender, religious or non-religious affiliation, sexual orientation or gender identity. We are also fully committed to the fundamental ethical principles of:

- Consideration for others
- Awareness of the importance and celebration of each and every individual within the School community
- The need to respond generously to the needs of those less economically fortunate than ourselves.

School assemblies cover themes of shared concern and are not biased in respect of any religion, denomination or gender. Just as cultural and religious diversity within the School community is to be valued, so it is important that the life and direction of individual religious groups should be supported within the context of Plumtree School.

#### **Principle 2**

##### **Diversity is recognised and respected.**

Treating people with respect and consideration, in accordance with Principle 1, does not necessarily mean that everyone should be treated identically. We aim to treat members of our school community with the utmost consideration and respect, and in doing so will approach their life situations, experiences and problems with a personalised and differentiated response in accordance with their particular needs. We will also recognise and respond to problems that people may face, and will recognise and work to eliminate discrimination, in relation to:

- Disability
- Ethnicity

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- Sex
- Gender
- Religion, belief or faith background
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender identity

And as relevant:

- Pregnancy/maternity

And in relation to employment:

- Age
- Marriage/civil partnership

The Proprietor will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Plumtree School fully acknowledges its moral duty (as related to the United Kingdom's Race Relations Act, 1976, Section 1) to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between members of different racial groups and it positively welcomes any communal or educational opportunities afforded by the school's cultural and religious diversity. All members of the School (whether of the student body, teaching or support staff) deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and with a sensitive understanding of their religious, cultural and racial differences and of the consequences thereof. Racially abusive language by students or staff will not be tolerated. If racial, religious or cultural elements are discovered to be present in incidents of bullying, these must be acknowledged and challenged. Racially abusive language by staff or students will be a matter for disciplinary action. Special leave for religious reasons will not be unreasonably refused by the School. Applications for such leave should be made in writing to the Head Teacher. Any special leave granted will be treated as unpaid leave; part-time employees may be given the option of making up lost time if this would benefit the School.

Equal opportunities will be considered when grouping children for activities. This may involve specific grouping to ensure that every child participates fully (e.g. by attainment). Each child will be given opportunities to exercise responsibility within the classroom or the school, with care taken regarding stereotyping of roles. We see boys and girls as both carers and leaders. When lining up, boys and girls are mixed (within their own class).

### **Principle 3**

#### **Everyone is welcomed and made to feel comfortable within our school community**

Our policies and practices should work to ensure that relations between different individuals and identity groups within school are positive, cordial and tolerant. This includes the promotion of:

- Positive attitudes, knowledge and understanding towards disability.
- Positive attitudes, knowledge and understanding of different ethnicities, cultures, religions, races and nationalities.
- Positive attitudes and mutual respect between boys and girls; women and men; and an intolerance of any sexual, homophobic or gender-based prejudice.

We welcome all applicants to join the school, whatever the background or physical disability of a child. We also seek to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion affects the school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions. We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups. We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

### **Principle 4**

#### **Plumtree School follows best practice in staff recruitment, retention, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and cessation of employment.**

All policies and practices adopted by Plumtree School should be of benefit to employees and potential employees, in all areas of recruitment, promotion, retention, CPD, discipline, dismissal and redundancy. Employees and potential employees should receive equal opportunities in these areas, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation. As relevant, employees and potential employees should be given equal

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opportunities regardless of pregnancy, maternity, marriage/civil partnerships. Being a committed equal opportunities employer, the School will take every possible step to ensure that employees are treated equally and fairly in respect of these matters, be they staff or pupil, and the School challenges stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs. All pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school, and we are always striving to remove all forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning. All policies and practices will conform to the principle of equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career development, discipline and dismissal, and redundancy.

#### **Principle 5**

##### **We will recognise and address inequalities and barriers that already exist.**

Plumtree School aims to foster an environment in which inequalities in any form are not manifest in our community. We will, however, commit to recognising any forms of inequality that do arise, and will work to combat these in the most effective manner possible.

**Anti-Racism:** It is the right of all pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident. We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of different cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school. Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person in overcoming any difficulties they may have. The following are some ideas on how racism can be combatted:

- Pupils' names should be pronounced correctly and nicknames should be the prerogative of the nicknamed.
- Attention should be paid to spelling names correctly at all times.
- Literature in school should include names from a wide variety of cultures.
- Racist language must be categorically rejected.
- Racial stereotypes should never be used or allowed. Those in classical literature must be made explicit to pupils and contextualized.
- Bi-lingual pupils and parents must be allowed to nominate an interpreter when necessary.
- Lack of fluency in the English language should not be used as an indication of academic potential.

#### **Sex:**

- No pupil should be excluded from receiving the curriculum on the basis of their sex.
- No privileges must be reserved for pupils on the basis of their sex.

#### **Class:**

- Assumptions should not be made about pupils' home circumstances or potential based on social class.
- Pupils must be allowed to talk in their natural dialect as and when they need to.
- Direct speech in children's work may reflect dialect, particularly in the lower school before punctuation differentiates speech in written work.

#### **Principle 6**

##### **The wider community and society should benefit from our policies and practices.**

We intend that our policies and practices contribute to the creation and maintenance of a diverse, tolerant and socially cohesive community. We aim to encourage the active participation of all individuals and groups in society and in public life, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation. We intend to promote a society in which discrimination, victimisation and harassment on the basis of any perceived 'difference' is not tolerated.

#### **Principle 7**

##### **On-going review and appraisal**

Plumtree School is committed to regular review of its equalities policy, which will be evaluated and edited in the light of public research; individual comments and/or complaints; quantitative and qualitative information gathered by the school. Plumtree School is open to feedback and response on all matters related to its equalities policy from all stakeholders, including pupils, staff and parents.

##### **Procedures for addressing discriminatory behaviour.**

##### **Definitions**

Plumtree School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

**Discrimination:** treating one person less favourably than another on the grounds of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

**Harassment:** any unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can be persistent or isolated and includes behaviour which induces anger, stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the person being harassed. It can be physical, verbal, direct or indirect and can include gestures, intimidation, unwelcome remarks, suggestions, propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and 'banter'. In addition, non-verbal harassment can include offensive literature, pictures, graffiti, isolation, non-co-operation or unwelcome physical conduct. The school will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying: such behaviour is totally unacceptable and the school looks to support any employee who is suffering from harassment. The school strives to provide a neutral working environment in which no-one feels threatened or intimidated.

**Victimisation:** treating one person less favourably than another on the grounds that that he or she has brought discrimination proceedings, given evidence or information regarding discrimination proceedings or alleged discrimination or because he or she intends to do any of these acts.

**Unwanted Behaviour:** If you feel that you have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised in breach of the principle of equal opportunities set out above, you are entitled to complain using the procedures set out below.

### **Informal Resolution**

**Stage 1:** You should speak or write to the individual concerned informing him or her that their behaviour is unwelcome.

**Stage 2:** If the unwanted behaviour continues, you should ask the Head Teacher to speak to the person concerned. If the person concerned is the Head Teacher, you should ask the Proprietor to speak to the Head Teacher.

**Stage 3:** If the unwanted behaviour continues, you should keep a record of any relevant incidents and consider taking formal action as set out below.

### **Formal Procedure**

**Formal notification:** If you feel that the informal procedure has not stopped the unwanted behaviour or that the behaviour is too serious to be resolved by using that procedure, you should follow the formal parts of the School's Grievance Procedure. You will be entitled to an appeal against any decision in accordance with the Grievance Procedure. Under the Grievance Procedure, any grievance will be investigated thoroughly by an impartial member of management. Where possible, the member of staff complaining of harassment or discrimination will be kept anonymous. Any mischievous, vexatious or malicious claims of harassment of any nature will be regarded as gross misconduct.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff and stakeholders should recognise that they have a specific role and responsibility in their day-to-day work to:

- promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour;
- tackle bias and stereotyping;
- respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and report these;
- highlight to the senior leadership team any staff training or development that they require to carry out the above role and responsibilities;
- promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour;
- tackle bias and stereotyping;
- work to promote anti-bullying strategies and
- respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and understand the action needed to report these.

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Every employee is required to assist the Proprietor and the whole school to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.
- Employees should be aware that they can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Proprietor for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.
- Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or parents and their families are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

### **The Role of the Head Teacher**

- It is the Head Teacher's role to implement the school's equal opportunities and anti-racist policy.

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- It is the Head Teacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The Head Teacher ensures that all recruitment and selection processes give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The Head Teacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme.
- The Head Teacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

### **The Role of the Class Teacher**

The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child. When selecting classroom material, the class teacher should pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups. When designing schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues. So, for example, History topics in our school include examples of the significant contributions women have made to developments in this country's history. In Geography topics the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world. All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any serious incidents on CPOMS, and draw them to the attention of the Head Teacher.

### **Equality of Opportunity: Employment Code of Practice**

Plumtree School is an equal opportunities employer, and aims to implement best practice in this area.

#### **Recruitment**

All newly created posts will normally be advertised externally in the national press, and/or in local press, and/or in specialist journals as appropriate to the position in question. Our aim in doing this is to encourage suitable applicants from a broad range of backgrounds. In observing equal opportunities practice, Plumtree School will also make clear in employment advertisements and application packs our exemption under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act as part of our Child Protection commitments.

#### **Selection of Candidates**

We will clearly define requirements for selection in the job descriptions sent to candidates as part of the employment application process. Selection criteria for employment will be objective, job-specific and carefully assessed as necessary to the fulfilment of the position.

Interviewing and short-listing will be carried out in a consistent and fair manner across all positions and departments within the school, in order to ensure an equitable and non-discriminatory practice. Selection methods for interviewing and short-listing will be objective and directly relevant to the nature of the vacant position. Interviewing must only be carried out by suitably qualified and prepared panels of staff.

#### **Existing Workforce**

The school will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

#### **Job Applicants Equality Profile**

Plumtree School will regularly monitor the ethnic/gender/age/disability profile of job applicants applying to the school throughout the main stages of recruitment (application, short-listing, and interview) using the information voluntarily provided by applicants in the personal information section of the job application form. This is the responsibility of the Head Teacher.

#### **Employee Training and Development**

Plumtree School is committed to equality of opportunity in terms of access to CPD and training to increase employees' knowledge, skills and professional awareness in order that they are more readily able to fulfil their full professional potential.

#### **Grievances Following Termination of Your Employment**

**Procedure:** If you wish to raise a grievance in writing following the termination of your employment, you should follow the relevant provisions of the School's Grievance Procedure.

#### **Disability Equality Policy**

##### **Compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)**

Plumtree School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

The Head Teacher of Plumtree School has a proactive approach in ensuring that there is no discrimination against disabled children and prospective children in the provision of education and associated services in Plumtree School and in respect of admissions and exclusions. Improving access to education and educational achievement by disabled children is essential to the Proprietor's policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation in society and the economy.

We are committed to Disability Equality and understand the need to embrace the spirit of the Disability Equality Duty detailed in the Disability Discrimination Act 2006 (DDA) and the Equality Act 2010. Through a positive approach we actively work towards disability equality, with our pupils, parents/guardians and staff. We note that the Duty is grounded in the Social Model of Disability and undertake to understand the implications of this and ensure it is embedded in the school culture and informs the way we apply the Duty. The school's ethos of love and care and its commitment to justice are the foundation of its aims in educating the whole school community to make its proper contribution to society. This policy and the Accessibility Plan contribute to the review and revision of related school policies as follows:

- School Improvement/Development Plan
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA);
- Equality and Diversity Policy (Equal Opportunities, Racial Equality and Anti-bullying);
- Curriculum Policies;
- Admissions Policy;
- Inclusion Policy;
- Learning Outside the Classroom.

Plumtree School is committed to treating its pupils and applicants fairly. According to the Equality Act 2010, we must take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils and applicants are not put at a substantial disadvantage by comparison with pupils and applicants who are not disabled. Plumtree School therefore seeks to cater for every situation. It is intended as a general statement of our policy which sets out the principles underlying our approach to making adjustments for disabled pupils and the factors the school will take into account when considering requests for adjustments. Disability discrimination law covers employment, the provision of services and the provision of education. It is the policy of the School to comply with the DDA. All documentation in Plumtree School (handbooks, policies and procedures) take into account the implications of the DDA.

### **Definition of Disability**

"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."

Reference to disabled people includes disabled children, young people and adults, as pupils, employees, proprietors, parents and carers and other members of the wider community that might use school premises for leisure or other activities. The definition of disability covers a broad spectrum of impairments including cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, multiple sclerosis, hearing or sight impairments, mobility difficulties, and mental health conditions or learning difficulties/disabilities.

The *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001*:

- provides for disabled children by preventing discrimination against them at school on the grounds of disability;
- grants jurisdiction to Special Educational Needs Tribunals to hear claims of disability discrimination;
- revises and reforms the existing Special Educational Needs regime ("SEN");
- imposes new planning duties on independent schools.

It is the policy of our school to ensure that we do not discriminate against a disabled child by:

- treating a disabled child or prospective child less favourably for a reason relating to his or her disability than someone to whom that reason does not apply *without justification*; or
- failing to make reasonable adjustments to admission arrangements and, in relation to education and associated services, failing to ensure that disabled children or prospective children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their non-disabled colleagues *without justification*.

It is, however, extremely important to note that the duty on the school to make reasonable adjustments extends to providing auxiliary aids and services but not to making alterations to the physical features of Plumtree School.

### **Our Aims and Objectives for Disability Equality**

Our key objective is to reduce and eliminate barriers to accessing the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for pupils, prospective pupils and adult users with a disability. Our aims and objectives reflect the requirements of the Duty and that is to have due regard to do the following:

- promote equality of opportunity between Disabled People and non-Disabled People;

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- to continually aim to improve the inclusivity of the curriculum;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- eliminate harassment of Disabled People that is related to their impairment;
- promote positive attitudes towards Disabled People;
- encourage participation by Disabled People in public life and
- take steps to meet Disabled People's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

### **Principles**

Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the school's aims and equal opportunities policy. The school recognises its duty under the DDA:

- not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, provision of education and associated services;
- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably;
- to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage and
- to publish an Accessibility Plan.

In performing their duties, the school has regard to the DRC Code of Practice (2002). The school recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on the child's ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils in the light of their assessed needs; and endorses the key principles which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs and
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual and groups of pupils.

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils and applicants who are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 when they are put at a substantial disadvantage compared with pupils and applicants who do not have disabilities. A pupil or applicant is disabled if (s)he suffers from a physical or mental impairment that has substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. In most cases, disabilities will have lasted or be likely to last for 12 months or more.

There are several very important concepts within the above definitions of discrimination. These include:

#### Disability

The definition of disability is the same as for disability discrimination in the employment field. In brief, a disabled child or prospective child is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial, long term and adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disabilities may, for example, include epilepsy, learning and behavioural difficulties, as well as the "traditionally" recognised disabilities. There are, however, specific exclusions for substance dependency, seasonal allergies, and tendencies to steal, start fires or physically/sexually abuse.

#### Admissions, Education and Associated Services

Plumtree School has a duty not to discriminate within the parameters of our published admission policy. "Admissions" refers to the criteria set out within the published admissions policy including the terms on which admission is offered. This extends in reverse to exclusions. "Education and associated services" means effectively all aspects of school life including preparation for entry, the curriculum, classroom organisation, time-tabling, access to Plumtree School facilities, and extra-curricular activities, school policies including discipline and off site activities.

#### Less Favourable Treatment

This means treating a child, for the reason relating to the child's disability, less favourably than Plumtree School would treat a child without such a disability. For example, in the case of a child with epilepsy, if Plumtree School refused to admit the child on the grounds that the child would have fits, then the comparison to be made would be with a child who meets similar criteria for admission but does not have epilepsy.

Assuming here that the other child would not be barred from admission, the disabled child in this example would be the subject of less favourable treatment.

#### Reasonable adjustments

Plumtree School takes steps that are reasonable to ensure that enrolled and prospective disabled children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled children. Plumtree School understands that it will be treated as

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discriminating against such a child if it fails *without justification* to take such reasonable steps to the child's detriment. It is, however, extremely important to note that the duty on the school to make reasonable adjustments extends to providing auxiliary aids and services but not to making alterations to the physical features of Plumtree School. There are no generic answers as to what a reasonable adjustment is, a reasonable adjustment is always child specific and context specific. We will take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils. Many reasonable adjustments are inexpensive and will often involve a change in practice rather than the provision of expensive pieces of equipment or additional staff. What is reasonable in one set of circumstances may not be reasonable in another. We will always consider the needs of the individual, the resources (including finances and staffing) that we have available, the interests of other pupils and prospective pupils and the extent to which the adjustment would affect the disadvantage suffered by the disabled pupil.

Examples of the type of reasonable adjustment may include:

- Plumtree School equal opportunity and bullying policies covering the instances of harassment on grounds of disability;
- Training willing teaching and support staff to administer medication (eg. in the case of an epileptic fit) or to adopt teaching practices to cope with disabled children (eg. those with hearing difficulties) and
- Relocation of certain facilities within our school to enable access for disabled children.

#### Without justification

Treating a disabled child less favourably or failing to make a reasonable adjustment is discriminatory unless there is *justification*, which may include financial considerations. Plumtree School operates its admission criteria objectively.

#### **Increasing Accessibility**

Admission to the school depends upon a prospective child meeting the required entrance criteria. Plumtree School must feel reasonably sure that we will be able to meet the educational needs and develop the prospective pupil to the best of their potential. This is to ensure that there is every chance that the child will have a complete, happy and successful time at school and will grow into a well-rounded adult, fully equipped with essential life skills. The strands to the planning duty at Plumtree School are:

##### To improve the inclusivity of the curriculum.

The term "curriculum" covers not only teaching and learning but the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities or school visits. Plumtree School already provides additional provision to enable children with learning difficulties to access the curriculum based on the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice* (DfE: July, 2014). In focusing on this part of the duty Plumtree School considers the needs of a wide range of disabled children and prospective children. Consequently, the school makes the curriculum accessible to all children, using the documents to develop the use of curriculum audits to review the patterns of achievement and participation by disabled children in different areas. Plumtree School uses a variety of approaches when planning and delivering the curriculum to draw on the different strengths and aptitudes of children. It also takes into account and considers staff training needs.

##### To improve the accessibility of the site.

This strand includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. Improvements in physical access might include ramps, handrails, widened doorways, etc. Plumtree School considers accessibility in all purchasing directions.

##### To improve accessibility to information for disabled learners.

Plumtree School uses several of its policies as tools in making the curriculum accessible to disabled children: *Inclusion, SEN, Target Setting and Accessibility Plan*. The School will set out in its plan how it will provide the written material it usually provides for all children to disabled children within a reasonable time. The Proprietor has a three year accessibility plan. Our accessibility plan is a plan for:

- (a) increasing the extent to which disabled children can participate in the school curriculum;
- (b) improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled children can take advantage of education and associated services and
- (c) improving the delivery to disabled children of written information which is provided to children who are not disabled. This should be done within a reasonable period of time and in formats which take account of views expressed by children or parents about their preferred means of communication.

The accessibility plan must be in writing. Plumtree School has a duty to review plans, revise them if necessary, and implement them. Adequate resources for implementation should be allocated.

Plumtree School has to make its accessibility plan available to interested parties on request at reasonable times.

ISI monitors the planning duty through their inspections and the Secretary of State can intervene where a school is not complying with the planning duty, and can direct a school to do so.

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### **What is the scope of the duty?**

Plumtree School seeks to ensure that disabled pupils and applicants are not put at a substantial disadvantage by making reasonable adjustments:

1. to our policies, criteria and practices (i.e. the way we do things) and
2. by providing auxiliary aids and services (i.e. additional support or assistance).

There is no standard definition of an auxiliary aid or service. Examples include:

- pieces of equipment;
- extra staff assistance;
- note-taking;
- induction loops;
- audio-visual fire alarms;
- readers and
- assistance with guiding.

### **What is not covered?**

We are not required to remove or alter physical features to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Similarly, we do not need to provide auxiliary aids for personal purposes unconnected with the education and services provided by the school.

### **How do I request an adjustment?**

Plumtree School prides itself on considering whether there is any adjustment it could make to overcome any substantial disadvantage suffered by a disabled applicant or pupil. However, we do not always think of all possible adjustments and we want to work with parents to think as creatively as possible about this matter. If your child is disabled and you believe that (s)he is being put at a substantial disadvantage compared with pupils without disabilities and there is an adjustment that we could make which would overcome this, you may write to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (or "SENCO") setting out in full the adjustment and (if necessary) how the school could put this into practice.

### **The school's response**

In some cases, the school will be able to agree to and implement the requested adjustment as soon as possible. In particular, it is envisaged that where an adjustment costs 10% of a term's fees or less and satisfies the non-cost-related criteria listed below, it will be approved and implemented speedily. In other cases, for example where the adjustment would be logistically difficult or more financially costly, we may need to consider in more detail how best to overcome the substantial disadvantage that the pupil or applicant is suffering and what measures it is reasonable for the school to take. In these cases, the school may seek input from teachers, other experts (such as doctors and/or educational psychologists), you and the child in question.

### **How will the school decide whether an adjustment is reasonable?**

When considering whether it would be reasonable to make the adjustment, the school will consider the following factors:

- whether it would overcome the substantial disadvantage the disabled child is suffering;
- the practicability of the adjustment;
- the effect of the disability on the pupil;
- the cost of the proposed adjustment;
- whether it will be provided under a EHC Plan from the Local Authority;
- the school's resources;
- health and safety requirements;
- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards; and
- the interests of other pupils (and potential pupils).

### **Confidentiality**

You (or your child if the school believes (s)he has sufficient understanding of the nature of the request) may request that the existence or nature of your child's disability be treated as confidential by the school. We will take any such request into account when considering whether an adjustment is reasonable.

### **Outcome**

Once the school has determined whether the relevant adjustment is reasonable, we will write to you, setting out the decision and the reasons.

### **What can you do if you are not happy with the school's decision?**

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If you are not happy with the school's decision about the reasonableness of the adjustment, you may lodge a complaint using the school's Complaints Procedure.

### **Planning Duties**

Whilst Plumtree School is not required by SENDA to make alterations to the physical features of the School, it has drawn up accessibility plans to improve access to education over time. The plans concentrate on three specific areas:

- improvements in access to the curriculum;
- physical improvements to improve access to education and associated services and
- improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled children.

At Plumtree School the plan has been prepared in writing, implemented and will be regularly reviewed. It is understood that the accessibility plans will be subject to review as part of the ISI inspection.

### **The Disability Discrimination Act in the Employment Context**

The Act defines certain types of disabled people who are protected from discrimination by employers. S.1(1) of the Act provides that *"a person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities"*. The definition of disability contained in s.1 can therefore be said to break down into four main parts:

- the person must have a physical or mental impairment;
- the impairment must have adverse effects which are substantial;
- the substantial effects must be long-term and
- the long-term substantial effects must have an adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities.

### **Discrimination and Reasonable Adjustment**

The Act imposes an obligation on Plumtree School to make certain adjustments to its premises and the ways in which it offers employment, in order to accommodate disabled employees.

A failure to comply with the duty to consider reasonable adjustments is, in itself an act of unlawful discrimination, unless it can be justified for a reason which is both material to the circumstances of the particular case and substantial (s4(2) and (4)). The duty of Plumtree School to make adjustments will only be triggered when it employs a disabled person, or a disabled person applies, or considers applying for a job at our school.

### **Recruitment arrangements**

In the recruitment process, the duty to make adjustments for disabled persons applies in relation to disabled people who are actual or potential job applicants (s.6(5)(a)). However, the School only has a duty to make adjustments in relation to an actual or potential job applicant or an employee whom it knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, has a disability (or has had a disability) and is likely to be put at a substantial disadvantage by the proprietor's existing arrangements (s.6(6)(b)).

If applicants indicate in their CV and application form that they are disabled, then Plumtree School will make adjustments for them in the recruitment process. Plumtree School will appraise all staff involved in the recruitment process as to the nature of applicants' disabilities, so that they can look for disabled applicants when they arrive and offer them assistance, if necessary.

### **What adjustments should Plumtree School be making to the School Premises?**

The Disability Discrimination (Employment) Regulations 1996 (SI No 1456) provides that for the purposes of the Employer's duty to make reasonable adjustments, the following are to be treated as physical features of its premises whether they are permanent or temporary (Regulation 9):

- any feature arising from the design or construction of a building on the premises;
- any feature on the premises of any approach to, exit from or access to such building;
- any features, fittings, furnishings, furniture, equipment or materials in or on the premises and
- any other physical element or quality of any land included in the premises.

### **Admissions**

Plumtree School asks parents to include in their admissions documentation a note as to the health of the prospective child at the time of application and any reasonable adjustments which may be required for the purpose of the entry process or education at our school. In assessing any child or prospective child, our school may take advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this, Plumtree School is sensitive to any requests for confidentiality. Applications are considered in line with the admission arrangements for all pupils. A child's disability does not prevent their being offered a place and integrated into the school unless:

- the content, structure and delivery of the curriculum are such that the child would be prevented from fulfilling a major part of it and

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- our school would be unable to provide suitably trained staff, facilities or resources to allow the requirements of our curriculum to be met.

We have an ongoing commitment to disability equality within our school and through a positive approach, actively work alongside the proprietor, parents/guardians, staff and pupils of Plumtree School. We work towards:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in our school curriculum and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing to non-disabled pupils by ensuring that a range of different formats and communication aids are used where necessary to ensure that all information is accessible to everyone within our school.

What follows is Plumtree School's Strategy:

- The strategy is available to interested parties on request.
- The strategy can be inspected by ISI to ensure that responsibilities have been discharged in the preparation, revision and implementation of the strategy.
- The School Strategy is reviewed every three years.

### **Delivery of the curriculum**

Plumtree School staff are provided with continuous professional development in further making the curriculum accessible to all pupils. The school seeks and follows the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEN inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

### Access to the Curriculum

It is vital that disabled pupils be able to access the curriculum. There should be:

- a communicative friendly environment;
- a commitment to becoming a dyslexic-friendly school and
- support for individual needs.

### **Physical environment**

Plumtree School, whilst having an exceptional physical environment, continues to take account of the needs of pupils and other users with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises. Whilst we have excellent access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, we will continue to ensure this standard is both maintained and built upon. To this end a full audit of the buildings and site to identify obstacles has been carried out and an accessibility plan produced.

### **Provision of information in other formats**

Our school is aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

### **Teaching and learning style**

Through the combination of teaching and pastoral care we aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour;
- seek to involve all parents/guardians in supporting their child's education;
- provide educational visits and extra-curricular activities that all pupils can participate in;
- take account of the performance of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets and
- make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of pupils.

In our school we aim to tackle disability discrimination and promote equality of opportunity across all aspects of our school life. We do this by:

- creating an ethos in which pupils and staff feel valued and secure;
- building self-esteem and confidence in our pupils, so that they can then use these qualities to influence their own relationships with others;
- removing or minimizing barriers to learning, so that all pupils can achieve;
- ensuring that our teaching takes into account the learning needs of all pupils through our schemes of work and lesson planning;
- actively tackling disability discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity through our school Prospectus, Code of Conduct, newsletters to parents and displays of work and

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- making clear to our pupils what constitutes aggressive and discriminatory behaviour.

All our staff have a duty to work to this policy to ensure inclusion of pupils with disabilities. Wherever practicable, Plumtree School considers and seeks to employ disabled people in jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (2005). We ensure that employees with disabilities are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications and they are not disadvantaged when renewal of fixed-term contracts is being considered.

Members of staff who become disabled, so far as is practicable, should continue to remain employed by our school at the discretion of the proprietor. This is dependent on their ability to carry out the duties of their post. Help from related professional organisations should be sought when considering not only the possible effects of the disability but also other consequential disadvantages, such as loss of status or financial loss. The school will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments to enable the employee to continue in post. However, options might include:

- continuing in the same post;
- a gradual return to work;
- a reduction in hours;
- redeployment;
- premature retirement on grounds of incapacity and
- termination of employment.

In cases where a disability is a degenerative, progressive condition that develops over time, careful consideration should be given to the selection of the most appropriate option(s). The school makes reasonable changes to work practices and, where possible, the workplace to enable disabled people to work successfully, including those members of staff who become disabled whilst employed.

### **Tackling Disability Harassment**

Any incident of disability harassment is unacceptable in our school. Any adult witnessing an incident or being informed about an incident must follow these agreed procedures:

- stop the incident and comfort the pupil who is the victim;
- reprimand the aggressor and inform the victim what action has been taken;
- if the incident is witnessed by other pupils, tell them why it is wrong;
- report the incident to the Head Teacher and inform of the action taken;
- inform the class teacher of both the victim and the aggressor, then record what happened in the Behaviour Book which is kept in the office and
- inform both sets of parents, if appropriate.

### **The Elimination of Harassment / Promotion of Understanding**

It is important to maintain a supportive environment and eliminate negative pressures that might impede the progress of a disabled child and damage self-esteem:

- Anti-bullying Policy regularly reviewed;
- Regular assemblies, circle time about our differences and
- Education regarding types of disabilities and the needs of those individuals – among staff, pupils and the general community to encourage empathy.

### **Policy into practice**

This policy is included in induction meetings for staff, parents/guardians and pupils and added to the agenda of staff meetings.

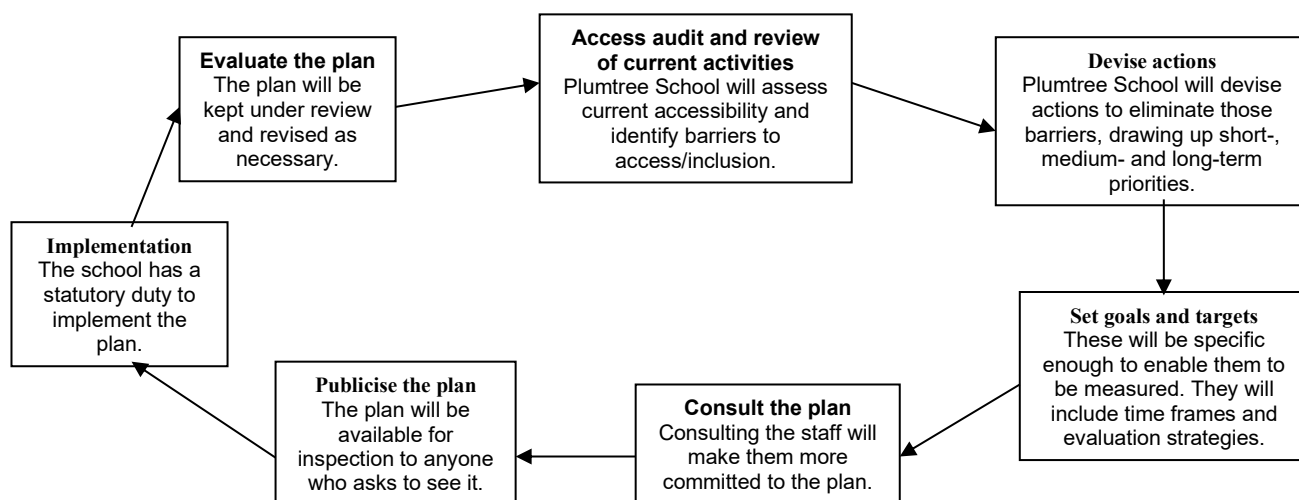
### **Policy impact**

- We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies. We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for pupils with a disability. We pay specific attention to the impact that our policies have on the attainment of pupils with a disability.
- We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils' progress, as they move through Plumtree School. As part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of pupils, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress. We use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary. Resources are available to support groups of pupils where the information suggests that progress is not as good as it should be.
- Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in pupil performance. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet individual needs and to set targets in our strategic plan, in order to make the necessary improvements.

### **Developing Our Accessibility Plan**

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Therefore, Plumtree School has developed its accessibility plan in the following ways:



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