

Policy Title:	Disability Equality Scheme
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Disability Equality Scheme

1. Definition

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who 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”.

The Disability Amendment Act 2005 extended this definition to include:

- People with cancer or surviving cancer (although not all cancers)
- People with HIV and Multiple Sclerosis from the point of diagnosis
- People with a mental impairment without the need for it to be clinically well recognised, although a long-term and adverse effect on ability to carry out normal day-to-day duties must still be demonstrated

The definition of disability under the Act differs from the eligibility criteria for special educational needs and disabilities provision. This means that students with a disability may or may not have special educational needs and disabilities.

2. Aims

At The Oxford Academy, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled students, staff and all those receiving services from the Academy. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in Academy life. The achievement of disabled students will be monitored and we will use the data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the Academy environment is as accessible as possible. At The Oxford Academy, we believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

3. Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a general duty on schools to have due regard for the following when carrying out their functions:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people

- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- Eliminating harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

This is also known as the Disability Equality Duty (DED) and applies to all disabled students, staff and those using services provided by the Academy.

4. Academy Principles

Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the Academy's aims and equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the Academy's Special Education Needs and Disabilities policy.

The Academy recognises its duty under the DDA:

- not to discriminate against disabled students in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
- not to treat disabled students less favourably
- to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage
- to publish an Accessibility Plan
- to ensure governors and staff have regard to the Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice (2006) when performing their duties. See Annex 1
- to value parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his or her ability to carry out normal activities
- to respect the parent's and student's right to confidentiality
- to provide all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles, and to endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum framework which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum. In so doing, setting suitable learning challenges by:

- responding to students' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment, for individuals and groups of students

5. Identifying and Monitoring Disability

The Academy seeks to identify students who have a disability prior to admission and during their time at the Academy. We will, from time to time, ask parents by letter to identify themselves if they have a disability. Staff and governors who are disabled will be asked to identify themselves on appointment or, if a disability becomes apparent during the course of employment or office, when it becomes apparent. Having identified individuals we will work with them to identify their needs, how we can meet them and monitor how well we meet them.

To meet the Disability Equality Duty, it is essential that aspects of Academy life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on students and staff with disabilities. At the Academy, the following is regularly monitored:

- Achievement of pupils by disability
- Learning opportunities
- Levels of attendance, exclusions and bullying by disability
- Employment, promotion and training of disabled staff (including numbers, type of disability and satisfaction rates in staff surveys etc.)

The views of those students (and their parents) affected by this Scheme will be sought during regular meetings.

Formal evaluation will form part of the review process at the end of the three year cycle but the Academy will report on the progress against the Disability Equality Action Plan every year. The Academy will use the information gathered to update and amend the Scheme and set new targets.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Governing Board

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board to ensure that this Scheme is put in place, monitored and reviewed and the contents put into practice.

6.2 **Principal**

It is the responsibility of the Principal to take, or designate, a leading role, in the development, monitoring and review and implementation of this Scheme.

6.3 **Staff**

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they implement this Scheme in their daily work.

6.4 **Students**

It is the responsibility of students to follow any Academy rules and expectations arising from this Scheme and to respect individual differences.

6.5 **Parents and Carers**

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to support students in following the expectations of the Academy.

7. **Education Provision**

The DDA requires the Academy to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students with disabilities and users of the Academy are not put at a substantial disadvantage and are able to access the same opportunities as students without disabilities.

Specifically, the Academy intends that students with disabilities and users will have the same access to the curriculum, to information and access to the Academy environment and facilities as students and users without disabilities.

In development planning to deliver this intention, the Academy considers the needs of current and future students, staff and users of the school. The principle strategies to bring about reasonable adjustments in the next three years are described in Annex 2 – The Disability Equality Action Plan, however many adjustments are made on an individual basis according to need for students and staff, whether disabled or not.

The Academy will consider itself to have succeeded in making reasonable adjustments when people with disabilities can, wherever possible, participate fully within the classroom and curriculum and when people with disabilities feel part of Academy life and are included by their peers in all aspects of Academy life, as acknowledged by both students, parents, staff and users of Academy premises.

8. Staff

Wherever practicable, the Academy will:

- consider and seek to employ disabled people in jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (2005)
- ensure that employees with disabilities are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications
- ensure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged when the renewal of fixed-term contracts is being considered

Members of staff who become disabled will continue to remain employed by the Academy, so far as is practicable, at the discretion of the Principal and Governing Board, dependant on their ability to carry out the duties of their post. Help from related professional organisations will 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 Academy 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
- 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 or options.

The Academy will make 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.

The Academy will ensure that training is offered to staff to increase their awareness of students with disabilities and inform them of appropriate action to be taken when delivering the curriculum. Teaching assistants will support teaching staff as required to help ensure that disabled students have equal access to the curriculum.

9. Additional Implications

9.1 Physical Environment

The Academy will take account of the needs of students and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes and more accessible facilities and fittings.

9.2 Lettings

The Academy will ensure that its buildings are accessible when hired to a third party.

9.3 Hiring Transport

The Academy will be mindful of the requirement of transport providers to provide accessible vehicles when hiring transport from bus, coach, taxi and private hire companies.

9.4 Communication with Parents and Carers

When providing newsletters and information for parents and carers, the Academy will make this information available in an accessible format so that parents or carers who may be, for example, visually impaired, can access the information.

Additionally, events for parents and carers such as open evenings and meetings with teachers will be held, whenever possible, in accessible parts of the building.

9.5 Election of Parent Governors

The election of parent governors is covered by the DDA 2005 and governors will ensure that the procedures for candidates to stand for election and for parents to vote for candidates are accessible to disabled people. If a disabled parent governor is elected, the Academy will ensure they can participate fully in Academy life.

9.6 External Support

The Academy will seek and take account of relevant advice of external services, where appropriate, such as specialist teacher advisers, SEND inspectors/advisers, medical professionals and social and healthcare professionals from the NHS Trusts and the Local Authority. The Academy will also ensure that it is aware of local services that can be utilised to support the provision for students and staff with disabilities, including those providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

9.7 Sharing of Information

It is likely that members of staff and possibly other members of the Academy community will need to know who has a disability and what is required to accommodate that person's needs. This information will be shared on a *need to know* basis.

9.8 Eliminating Harassment and Bullying

The Academy has adopted Harassment and Discrimination policies for both staff and students, a Dignity at Work policy and a Staff Code of Conduct which support non-discriminatory behaviour. The Academy's Attitudes to Learning and Anti-Bullying policies are regularly monitored and reviewed. All students and staff, including those with disabilities, are regularly consulted on their experiences within the Academy.

9.9 Health Service Links

The Academy has a School Health Nurse, employed by Community Health. She provides a direct link between the Academy and health care professionals dealing with our students and their parents. The School Health Nurse plays a leading role in helping the Academy anticipate and plan for the needs of current and future students with disabilities. The Head of Inclusion also maintains links with Mental Health, Hospital School and other medical professionals.

10. Involvement and Consultation

It is a requirement that disabled students, staff and those using Academy services should be involved in the production of the Disability Equality Scheme.

The Oxford Academy consults with disabled students, their parents, staff and other service users in the development of our Disability Equality Scheme through the Parent Forum, Student Reviews, parent/teacher meetings, consultation with feeder primary schools and regular meetings of the Disability Awareness Group.

11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Board will review this Scheme at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. Progress against the Action Plan will be reported on every year. The Scheme will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.

