Accessibility Policy

At Heronshaw School the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of all our children and being safe is paramount. We believe that the most important function of the school is to maintain an environment in which every member of the school is able to achieve success and self-fulfilment. There must be a total consistency of expectation that everyone (irrespective of gender, race or culture) should feel safe and secure, have empathy for all others, and place a high value upon individual achievement and personal development.

Within our school values and ethos, we clearly state the importance of valuing the individuality of all our children. We are committed to giving all children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 aims to end discrimination against people with disabilities and to improve access in all areas of life. Since 2002, it has been unlawful for Schools and Local Education Authorities to discriminate against pupils with disabilities in admissions and exclusions, in education, and in associated services.

From 1st October 2004, it became unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities by preventing them from having access to premises. Along with all other public buildings, our school is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable access.

At Heronshaw School, we recognise that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 places the following duties upon us:

- 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 make reasonable adjustments to the school buildings so that there is an increased access to education for disabled pupils and to make the school buildings more accessible for disabled persons.

The planning duties of the DDA makes three requirements of the Governing Body:

- To increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- To improve 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

Schools are required to resource, implement and review their accessibility plan as necessary. This plan will be monitored and evaluated by the General Purposes Committee of the Board of Governors. The plan within this Policy sets out the Governors' proposals for increasing access to education for disabled pupils.

Our Accessibility Plan details the changes required to our buildings and to other aspects of our school, so that we fulfil our legal requirements, and remove barriers to inclusion for all pupils and staff with disabilities.

What is disability?

The Disability and Discrimination Act states that *'a person suffers from a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day-to-day activities'*.

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives.

Disability is not the same as Special Educational Needs, and vice versa.

Aims and Objectives

- Heronshaw School aims to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all our children, and this of course includes pupils with disabilities.
- We will ensure that pupils with disabilities have the same opportunities as non-disabled pupils to benefit from the education our school provides.
- We will not treat a pupil with a disability less favourably than others because of the nature of his/her disability.
- We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that a pupil or member of staff with disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage.
- We will do our best to anticipate the needs of a pupil or staff member with disabilities before he/she joins the school.

Removing Barriers

The school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils and members of staff and the public are not disadvantaged.

Disabilities can limit the extent to which children are able to participate in the curriculum and can impede the delivery of information. So, for example, if a child suffers from hearing loss, the teacher will always try and face the child when addressing the class, or, in severe cases, the teacher may wear a microphone and transmitter.

The Accessibility Plan covers the measures we have already taken and are still taking to improve our school.

The Physical Environment

Heronshaw School is a single storey building on ground floor level. However, we will endeavour to improve provision for disabled pupils and staff by developing the physical environment of the school, within the limits of the resources available. Where necessary, we will try to improve the following if required:

- Access to the school, by installing ramps and handrails
- Movement around the building, e.g. by adaptations, such as improved colour schemes, for people with impaired sight
- Accommodation within the building, by providing toilets for disabled pupils, soundproofing for pupils with impaired hearing, and medical rooms
- Information and communication technology, by selecting appropriate hardware and software
- Signage, by putting it in clear print

The Curriculum

We use teaching strategies to enhance learning and participation in a broad and balanced curriculum. We find ways in which all pupils can take part in sport (PE) , music and drama. We plan our out-of-school activities and school trips in such a way that pupils with disabilities can participate.

We use language that does not offend, and we make staff and pupils aware of the importance of language.

The school regularly reviews the way in which resources are matched to the needs of all the children. If necessary, to improve our provision, adjustments will be made to classroom organisation, the deployment of support staff, timetabling and staff training.

Many of the adjustments we make are dependent upon individual needs, and we ensure an individualised approach through a Pupil Support Plan and Provision Maps.

We seek to respond to guidance from the parents and children. Also, we welcome the advice from external agencies such as specialist teachers, physiotherapists and occupational health.

Information

Information normally provided in writing (lesson content, texts, library resources and information about school events) will be made available in alternative formats that are clear and user friendly if required. This may be in the format of Braille or large print. Alternatively, it may be transmitted orally or through lip-speaking or sign language.

Safeguarding

At Heronshaw School, child protection and safeguarding are paramount, and we are fully committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children. We believe that students have a right to protection from all types of abuse; where staff are vigilant for signs of any student in distress and are confident about applying the process to avert and alleviate any such problems. If any behaviour is a concern in relation to safeguarding, Heronshaw's procedures and processes will be followed at all times in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following polices, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum Policy
- Equality Objectives and Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

- School Development Plan
- School Prospectus
- Vision Statement

Policy information	
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