



LARKRISE SCHOOL

**DISABILITY EQUALITY POLICY
AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

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Reviewed: February 2018

Next Review: February 2019

Guide to the Law Reference – HR
Link to

- Gender Equality
- Race Equality
- Performance Management
- Teachers Pay

Larkrise School

Larkrise is a day school for pupils aged 4 to 19 who have either severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple difficulties including Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

Introduction

Larkrise School recognises the SEN and Disability Act 2001. This extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled and consequently all Larkrise pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- not to treat any pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- to make reasonable adjustments for all our pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- to plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for all pupils in the areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which all our pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which all pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery of information to all pupils which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

- Appropriate communication systems for all pupils

In addition, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a general duty on schools, who need to have due regard for the following when carrying out their functions:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils
- 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 which is owed to all disabled pupils, staff and those using services provided by schools. The production of this Disability Equality Scheme provides us with a framework for integrating disability equality into all aspects of school life and demonstrates how we are seeking to meet the specific duty i.e. to produce a Disability Equality Scheme (including the Accessibility Plan) for our school.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is an action plan showing how Larkrise will address the priorities identified in the plan.

Aims and objectives

Larkrise School recognises that all pupils are of equal worth and should be nurtured as individuals. The curriculum is adapted so that all pupils have opportunities to develop appropriately. An holistic approach to education is adopted to support the development of the child as a whole. Physical, mental, cognitive, social, moral and spiritual wellbeing is fostered in all pupils. Their achievements are celebrated and respected.

The rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups are recognised, valued and supported. All in the school consider that safety, security and happiness are paramount to an individual's wellbeing. A moral code is promoted so that pupils are able to distinguish right from wrong irrespective of how others behave. Tolerance and understanding of individuals and diverse social groups is encouraged.

The adaptation of the school environment is managed so that pupils move from dependent learning to independence in wider settings. The future needs and skills of pupils are kept sight of so that their education is relevant today, tomorrow and in the future.

The school is realistic and optimistic about the futures of pupils. Educational priorities are set, these priorities are developed and shared with relevant stakeholders. The school believes that all pupils should be challenged through high expectations to achieve a standard they can be proud of. Upon leaving school all pupils should be ready to take an appropriate place in society, equipped to both contribute and benefit from life beyond school. To achieve this, the school actively promotes links with the community, in particular, giving students opportunities to work and socialise with peers from other schools.

This Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan has three main strands:

- Increased access to the curriculum for all pupils.
- Improvements to the school environment to increase accessibility for all pupils and disabled people.
- Improvements in the provision of information for all pupils and disabled people.

Definition of disability

The DDA defines a disabled person as someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The DDA identifies “substantial” as “more than minor or trivial” and “long term” as a period longer than (or is likely to be longer than) 12 months.

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments. The definition is broad and includes a wide range of impairments such as difficulties with mobility, coordination and manual dexterity; sight, hearing and speech and language impairments, epilepsy, autism, and breathing and continence problems as well as ‘hidden’ ones such as depression, dyslexia, cancer, HIV, diabetes. An impairment does not mean a pupil is disabled. It is the effect this has on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This school uses the “social model” of disability (Appendix 1), and so recognises that disability is not caused by the individuals, but by the physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers which can exist in society as a whole.

Current Practice

- Information is collected on disability with regards to both pupils and staff and this information is used to improve standards at the school.
- All pupils are encouraged and empowered to participate fully in school life through representation in school events and the school council.
- Bullying and harassment of disabled pupils and staff is monitored and this information is used to make a difference.
- Disability is portrayed positively in school books, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies.
- All classrooms and communal spaces are on ground level and accessible by ramped route.

- Open evenings and other events which parents or carers attend are held in accessible parts of the school and all disabled routes are available to parents and carers.
- Information is available to parents, visitors, pupils and staff in formats which are accessible if required (including verbal communication to support written communication where a parent/carer has a learning disability). Passenger Assistants and the Family Link Worker play a key role in fulfilling this function.
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled.
- The school day ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Arrangements are made for lunchtimes so that disabled pupils are not at a disadvantage.
- Developing classroom organisation and practice ensures that the needs of disabled pupils are accommodated and supported to learn.
- There is a good representation of disabled persons in books and other resources.
- The current school uniform is appropriate so as not to cause problems for disabled pupils. Individual needs and abilities are always considered when applying uniform rules.
- The recruitment procedures in place do not discourage applications from disabled persons.
- Current arrangements for parental consultations and Review meetings consider the needs of disabled parents

Larkrise School is keen to ensure that none of its policies and practices disadvantage disabled people. All existing policies and practices will be reviewed in accordance with the existing timetable. When creating new policies or carrying out reviews of existing policies, the staff and governors will:

- Assess their likely or possible consequences for disabled people
- Alter or amend proposed policies where necessary so that they promote disability equality and eliminate discrimination
- Identify actions arising from the policy which need to be added to the Action Plan, including the collection of associated evidence on the impact of the policy and actions.

It is a requirement that disabled pupils, staff and those using school services should be involved in the production of the Disability Equality Scheme. Larkrise School has involved disabled people in the development of this Scheme by:

- responding to the concerns of parents and carers raised at coffee mornings, meetings; and through feedback slips and questionnaires.
- consulted pupils through School Council meetings, SEAL questionnaires
- talked to disabled staff and parents
- consulting community users of facilities
- work experience feedback

The scheme will be reviewed taking into account the views of all stakeholders and any changes in legislation. Appropriate communication of the scheme is an area for development.

Increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils

This is achieved through the **Accessibility Plan**.

The school also draws upon the expertise of external partners e.g. Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Educational Psychologist, VI Team, Team Teach etc; and the expertise of in school professionals e.g. Manual Handling Trainers etc.

There are also valuable contributions from teachers and HLTAs, curriculum planning and timetabling and the appropriate deployment of teaching assistants. The school draws on advice from the LA and consultation with pupils and parents/carers

For all pupils consideration is always given to particular groups, as part of normal good teaching practice, for example:

- PE for pupils with a physical or sensory impairment
- Music for deaf and hearing impaired pupils
- Easy language and/or visual support information for pupils appropriate to their needs
- Appropriate communication aids and adaptations for those pupils with communication difficulties e.g. Makaton, symbols, PECs, Augmentative Communication Aids
- Large print for visually impaired pupils
- Classroom organisation so all pupils can access their environment, support provided as appropriate
- Lighting that supports lip reading and visually impaired pupils
- The elimination of bullying towards disabled pupils

Actions for 2010-11 (Increased access to the curriculum)

- The purchase of appropriate sensory equipment will be a priority.
- A rolling programme of classroom re-decoration to improve the sensory appropriateness of environments used by ASD students.

Actions for 2011-12 (Increased access to the curriculum)

- Dedicated ASD teaching environment

Actions for 2012-13 (Increased access to the curriculum)

- ASD appropriate lighting in all areas
- Second dedicated ASD teaching environment

Actions for 2013-14 (Increased access to the curriculum)

- Appoint ICT/AAC specialist to ensure that ICT better supports the curriculum

Actions for 2014-15 (Increased access to the curriculum)

- Increase the range of communication aids available within school so that all pupils have the most appropriate communication aid

Actions for 2015-16 (Increased access to the curriculum)

- Training and cascading of information for staff regarding inclusive software and equipment.

Actions for 2016-17 (Increased access to the curriculum)

- Develop inclusive links throughout the school

Improvements to the school environment to increase accessibility for disabled people.

An environment that welcomes diversity and difference and a school that learns how to improve access for disabled people is good for all.

For disabled adults visiting the school there are currently:

- Ramp access and reception facilities for wheelchair users in all buildings
- Safe floors securely fixed and not over polished
- Appropriate Fire, Health and Safety procedures to accommodate their needs e.g. internal evacuation points for wheelchair users

Actions for 2010-11 (Improvements to the school environment)

- Storage of Seating and other specialist student equipment
- Occupational Therapist Audit of the environment

Actions for 2011-12 (Improvements to the school environment)

- Hoisting extended to EYFS

Actions for 2012-13 (Improvements to the school environment)

- Hoisting extended to KS2
- Segregation of primary/secondary changing area

Actions for 2013-14 (Improvements to the school environment)

- Hoisting extended to KS3
- New classroom for ASD pupils taking into account sensory needs

Actions for 2014-15 (Improvements to the school environment)

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- Link all outside spaces and create appropriate stimulating environments that meet the needs of all groups of students

Actions for 2015-16 (Improvements to the school environment)

- Research and implement 'safe flooring' for some outside spaces to improve safe access to play for pupils with P.I.
- Improved catering arrangements to include Bain Marie facilitating easier communication regarding choice making and greater range and better quality of pureed foods.

Actions for 2016-17 (Improvements to the environment)

- Further develop quiet work spaces in two more classrooms

Improvements in the provision of information for disabled people.

Information for disabled people (provided in writing for people who are not disabled) is complemented by verbal communication via school staff, particularly, Passenger Assistants who have a good understanding of individual and family needs.

Actions for 2010-11 (Improvements in the provision of information)

- Developing the range of information posted onto Merlin

Actions for 2011-12 (Improvements in the provision of information)

- Development of website

Actions for 2012-13 (Improvements in the provision of information)

- Review whether a Family Link Worker could be employed within the predicted budget

Actions for 2013-14 (Improvements in the provision of information)

- Appoint Family Link Worker to better support parents including their access to information
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Actions for 2014-15 (Improvements in the provision of information)

- Redevelop website to include symbol based information

Actions for 2015-16 (Improvements in the provision of information)

- Provide lunch menu information in symbol format so that pupils can discuss choices with their families

Actions for 2016-17 (Improvements in the provision of information)

- Develop Community Links Area on school website to signpost events, support etc.

Monitoring and review

The Health and Safety delegated person and SLT are jointly responsible for monitoring Accessibility across the school. To meet the Disability Equality Duty, it is essential that aspects of school life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and young people with disabilities. Larkrise School formally monitors achievement for pupils with disabilities and informally monitors the satisfaction rates of disabled staff and visitors. The Health and Safety delegated person and the SLT are also responsible for supporting colleagues in understanding the expectations, for being informed about current developments and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the development of improved accessibility procedures in the school. They present an annual report to

governors evaluating the strengths and weaknesses and indicating areas for further improvement, which contributes to the annually updated DES and Accessibility Plan.

Publication and dissemination

Larkrise School makes its Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan available in the following ways:

- Making it available in alternative formats on request

_____ signed on behalf of the Governing Body

Date: November 2016

Date for review: November 2017

Appendices

Appendix 1

What is the Social Model of Disability?

The social model of disability is not a traditional diagrammatic model like many psychological and sociological models, but a progressive political concept that opposes the medical model commonly used in the health professions. The Social model of disability makes an important distinction between the terms impairment and disability.

- Impairment – Lacking part or all of a limb or having a defluctive limb, organ or mechanism of the body (including psychological mechanisms).
- Disability – The restrictions caused by the organisation of society which does not take into account individuals with physical or psychological impairments.

(UPAIS, 1976)

This distinction is embedded in social constructionism (a philosophical foundation of the social model), which states that these terms differ in that impairment exists in the real physical world and disability is a social construct that exists in a realm beyond language within a complex organisation of shared meanings, discourses and limitations imposed by the environment at a particular time and place.

The social model is a concept which recognises that some individuals have physical or psychological differences which can affect their ability to function in society. However the social model suggests it is society that causes the individual with these physical or psychological differences to be disabled. In other words individuals with impairments are not disabled by their impairments but by the barriers that exist in society which do not take into account their needs. These barriers can be divided into three categories: environmental, economic and cultural (British Council of Disabled People).