

SHERBURN HIGH SCHOOL

Equality Scheme

Three year period covered by this scheme:
2009- 2012

1.1 Purpose of the Equality Scheme

This equality scheme is the school's response to the specific and general duties in the current equality legislation. It is an attempt to capture how the school is systematically establishing and implementing good practice in equality and diversity across all areas of school life. This includes a response to all aspects of social identity and diversity as set out in the North Yorkshire County Council's Equality Policy Statement:

“we oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether because of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex or gender reassignment, marital status, family status, sexuality, religion or beliefs, disability, age or any other condition or requirement which places a person at a disadvantage and cannot be justified”.

This Equality Scheme sets out how the school will:

- eliminate discrimination;
- eliminate harassment related to any aspect of social identity or diversity;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote positive attitudes to all aspects of social identity and diversity;
- encourage participation by disabled people and people representing different aspects of social identity in public life;
- take steps to take account of difference even where that involves treating some people more favourably than others.

This document provides, therefore, a scheme which embraces for our school a Race Equality Scheme, a Gender Equality Scheme, a Disability Equality Scheme and the school's Equality Policy. It is reviewed every three years and reported on annually.

An action plan (Appendix A) accompanies this Equality Scheme which is renewed annually. In line with this Equality Scheme, the action plan sets out the equality and diversity objectives for the school which have been identified as a result of the school's equality impact assessment in line with this equality scheme and facilitated by the **Inclusion Quality Mark** audit tool.

This action plan embraces the Accessibility Plan for the school as it sets out how the school will increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the Disability Discrimination Act:

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

1.2 Equality Legislation

This equality scheme responds to the current equalities legislation:

- Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976/2000
statutory positive duty to promote racial equality, promote good race relations and eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 (and Regulations 1999), Gender Equality Duty 2007
statutory positive duty to promote gender equality and eliminate unlawful gender discrimination;
- Employment Equality (religion or belief) (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003 extended to education, Equality Act (Part 2) 2007
The Act sets out that it is unlawful for schools to discriminate against a person:
 - a) in the terms on which it offers to admit him/her as a pupil;
 - b) by refusing to accept an application to admit him/her as a pupil, or
 - c) where he/she is a pupil of the establishment:
 - i) in the way in which it affords him/her access to any benefit, facility or service,
 - ii) by refusing him/her access to a benefit, facility or service,
 - iii) by excluding him/her from the establishment,
 - iv) by subjecting him/her to any other detriment.
 (There are specific exemptions for faith schools.)
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995/2005
statutory positive duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: pupils, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to, and eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, duty to promote community cohesion.
By 'community cohesion' the school is endorsing and adopting the definition provided by Alan Johnson, 2006, as:
"working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a

society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.”

2 What kind of a school are we?

2.1 School Vision and Values

The school’s vision and values statement reflects the school’s ambitions for all its pupils. It refers to the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement for developing an inclusive curriculum: setting suitable learning challenges; responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs; overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The school statement also embraces the North Yorkshire Inclusion statement which emphasises that individuals and groups of learners who may be vulnerable to exclusion, marginalisation and underachievement are identified and receive targeted provision to ensure their presence, participation and achievement. The school is committed to achieving the **Inclusion Quality Mark** and is aspiring to achieve progressively higher levels of this award.

2.2 School Context

The nature of the school population and context to inform action planning for the equality scheme: Please refer to **Ensuring Disability Equality in School** document.

2.3 Responsibilities

The Governing Body and School Leadership Team will:

- be proactive in promoting equality and tackling discrimination in all areas;
- maintain an overview of the Equalities Scheme which will be a regular agenda item at governor meetings and ensure that all staff, parents and pupils adhere to it;
- work in partnership with others to tackle discrimination, and establish, promote and disseminate good practice in equalities;
- encourage, support and enable all pupils and staff to reach their full potential.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation (see para. 1.2);
- ensuring, with assistance from the Headteacher, that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented;
- electing a nominated governor with responsibility for Equalities who, with the Headteacher, will report to the full governing body.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- co-ordinating all equality work within the school;
- ensuring that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented on a day to day basis;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy and that they are given appropriate training and support to enable them to fulfil these responsibilities;
- initiating disciplinary action against staff or pupils who discriminate;
- dealing with reported incidents of racism, harassment or other forms of discrimination.

Specific Responsibilities:

- The SENCO is responsible for maintaining and sharing with all staff those vulnerable pupils and how their needs will be met
- Deputy Head(Standards) is responsible for gathering and analysing information on outcomes of vulnerable students and staff
- Deputy Head(Student/Staff Needs) is responsible for ensuring the specific needs of staff are addressed; monitoring the response to reported incidents of a discriminatory nature;coordinating the Inclusion Quality Mark.

All staff should:

- know how to deal with incidents of concern, and how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- know procedures for reporting incidents of racism, harassment or other forms of discrimination;
- not discriminate on racial, disability or other grounds;
- keep themselves up to date with relevant legislation and attend training and information events organised by the school or LA;
- ensure that pupils from all groups are included in all activities and have full access to the curriculum;
- promote equality and diversity through teaching and through relations with pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community.

All pupils will:

- learn about and understand the school's Equality Scheme and be expected to behave in accordance with it;
- experience a curriculum and environment which is respectful of diversity and difference and prepares them well for life in a diverse society;
- understand the importance of reporting discriminatory bullying and racially motivated incidents;
- ensure the peer support programme within the school promotes understanding and supports pupils who are experiencing discrimination;
- monitor progress through student groups eg. peer Bullying/school council

Visitors and contractors are responsible for complying with the school's Equality Scheme – non-compliance will be dealt with by the Headteacher.

3.1 Involvement Processes

Policies are vital to identify and consolidate thinking regarding appropriate provision for pupils, however, they are often viewed as an end, when they should be seen as a process - always evolving in response to changes and evidence from impact assessments. When developing this Equality Scheme, the school is clear that this is a process which must be informed by the involvement of all participants such as pupils, parents, school staff, governors and external agencies. This will ensure that the school gleans insights into the barriers faced by people from different social identity backgrounds and learns the best ways to overcome such barriers. This Scheme will be informed, therefore, by:

- the views and aspirations of pupils themselves from different social identity backgrounds;
- the views and aspirations of parents of pupils from different social identity backgrounds;
- the views and aspirations of staff from different social identity backgrounds;
- the views and aspirations of members of the community and other agencies, including voluntary organisations, representing different social identity backgrounds;
- the priorities in the North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan.

4 Making it happen

4.1 Implementation of Policy

This scheme is supported by an action plan, the progress of which is monitored and evaluated by the Governing Body.

The action plan that identifies the equality objectives for the school arising from this scheme and the impact assessment through the Inclusion Quality Mark has:

- clear allocation of responsibility;
- clear allocation of resources, human and financial;
- clear timescales;
- expected outcomes and performance criteria;
- specified dates for review;

The effectiveness of this Scheme will be evaluated and reflected in:

- the School Self-evaluation Form;
- the level achieved in the Inclusion Quality Mark;
- discussions with the School Improvement Partner.

4.2 Publication

This Equality Scheme will be published and available to anyone requesting a copy.

4.3 Reporting

This Scheme will be reported on annually. Progress against the action plan will be evaluated and the impact of the action and activities assessed. This report will be made available as a separate document and in the school profile and school prospectus.

Approved: Finance and Premises Dec 2007

Review Date: Dec 2010

Appendix A

SHERBURN HIGH SCHOOL

ENSURING DISABILITY EQUALITY IN SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled students, under part 4 of the DDA:

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

A person with a disability is:

"one who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to day activities"

Impairment

An impairment has a long term effect if it has lasted or is expected to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the life of the person concerned.

Substantial

This is neither minor nor trivial

Reasonable Adjustment

If to not make the adjustment could be deemed unreasonable

Discrimination

Treating a student "less favourably" than others for a reason relating directly to their disability

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

There are 17.5% of students in school classed as having a disability (June 2008). This information relies on school being given accurate information from parents and feeder schools. This plan sets out the proposals by the Governing Body to increase access to education for disabled students in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

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

The school's accessibility plan will be resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary.

The school also has a duty towards disabled staff (part 2 of the DDA) and towards the general public (part 3 of the DDA). No member of staff has disclosed that they have a disability.

VISION AND VALUES

Sherburn High School values each individual irrespective of race, colour, creed or impairment. It has a strong commitment to equal opportunities driven by the National Curriculum Inclusion statement whereby the school

- sets suitable learning challenges for all students
- responds to students' diverse needs
- overcomes potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students so impairments do not become disabling.

INFORMATION FROM PUPIL DATA

Every student regardless of ability or disability, is set realistic but challenging targets in all curriculum areas, and regular, robust tracking enables staff to monitor individual progress. Intervention strategies are embedded into the ethos of every curriculum area to ensure students are supported when underachieving. Vulnerable groups are identified and particular attention is paid to their progress using the data.

The school also has a robust attendance policy and practice, working closely with relevant external agencies to provide alternative provision for selected students.

The school not only works diligently with outside specialist agencies but learning support assistants provide high levels of support for disabled students so they are able to participate in every aspect of school life.

CONSULTING THE STAKE HOLDERS

It is, and always has been, the policy of the school to work closely with parents and this is certainly the case for disabled students. Student Voice is developing within the school and is recognised as an action point in the School Development Plan. Governors, parents, staff and students have all been involved in the production of the Accessibility Plan (meeting 06.06.2007)

THE MAIN PRIORITIES IN THE SCHOOL'S PLAN

- **DISABLED STUDENTS PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

The school constantly reviews curriculum provision to ensure a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum is provided. High quality

teaching with varied learning strategies is a main school priority.

Learning Support Assistants play an integral role supporting selected students. This deployment is carefully managed by the SENCO. Their role is not only to "connect" students to the curriculum, but to support the development of independence and promote social interaction. These are clearly recognised in the workings of H2L and S2L.

A relevant, personalised curriculum is provided for students as the school continues to work closely with nearby colleges and other external agencies. This alternative provision helps to meet individual student needs.

Examples of reasonable adjustments for impairments relating to behaviour are included in the Staff Handbook.

- **IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

The Site Manager takes responsibility, working closely with the Leadership Team, for improving the school environment and implementing the Local Authority's Accessibility Strategy. The plan is regularly reviewed and the views of students are actively sought. (Revised Plan attached.)

- **IMPROVING THE DELIVERY TO DISABLED STUDENTS OF INFORMATION THAT IS PROVIDED IN WRITING TO OTHER STUDENTS**

When barriers to learning are identified which are hindering students accessing information, action is taken immediately to rectify the problem. Good channels of communication within school ensure that all staff are aware of any issues. When working with students with more specialised needs eg. Using Braille it is a requirement that materials are provided to the support assistant well in advance of the lesson.

Students with disabilities are identified in the Staff Handbook.

MANAGEMENT

The school is required to include a copy of the accessibility plan in the prospectus.

Overall responsibility for the plan lies with the *Governing Body*, but improving access for disabled students requires everyone at school to understand the duties in the DDA and apply this knowledge in their own area of responsibility. (Launched September 2007)

Priorities in the school's accessibility plan are dovetailed into the relevant sections of the School Development Plan.