

# OUSEDALE SCHOOL

## DISABILITY ACCESS PLAN

### 1.0 Introduction

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. The Equality Act 2010 replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply. The Governing Body has a duty to make reasonable adjustments on a person. The duty comprises the following three requirements.

- The first is a requirement, where a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.
- The second is a requirement, where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.
- The third is a requirement, where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid.

This plan sets out the proposals of Ousedale's Governing Body to increase access to education for disabled students in the three areas required by the planning duties in the Equality Act:

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

It is a requirement from 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006 that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of priorities and approach to ensuring we always meet, within financial and site constraints, the needs of children who have a disability.

"The school" refers at all times to Ousedale School – both Newport Pagnell and Olney campuses.

It is recognised that the two sites have very different histories, capacities and abilities to meet the needs of students, parents/carers and staff with disabilities. In particular, the

built environment at Olney has been designed from the start with access for people with disabilities in mind.

## **2.0 Starting Points**

**Ousedale School recognises the DDA definition of Disability as follows:**

1. Problems with normal day to day activities, including
  - Mobility
  - Manual dexterity
  - Physical co-ordination
  - Lifting and moving objects
  - Continence
  - Speech
  - Hearing
  - Eyesight
  - Memory, concentration, learning, understanding
  - Perception of danger
2. Causation by an underlying impairment or condition
3. Impairment or condition lasting over 12 months
4. Impairment or condition more than minor or trivial

In general, Ousedale School would not exclude any student, staff or parent/carer member from this definition by reason of semantics if to be included would support the general aims of the school.

## **2.1 The purpose and direction of the school's plan: vision and values**

This plan stands with the formal statement of the "Aims of Ousedale School" and the various supporting policies to ensure that:-

- students, parents/carers and staff understand and respond supportively to each person's individual strengths and weaknesses in learning, behaviour and ability to access the environment and participate in the community;
- all students have access to the typical Ousedale curriculum relevant to their key stage, where possible in ordinary classes and rooms without resort to modification or disapplication;
- optimum use is made of resources available inside and outside school by developing a flexible range of support components to meet the special educational needs of individual students, and reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of students, parents/carers and staff with disabilities;
- every effort is made to remove barriers to communication, access and learning within the school, both at the time of discovery and in planning for the future, within the available resources delegated to the school.

## 2.2 Information from pupil data and school audit

Ousedale School has a population of students reflecting a profile of ability very close to national norms for a mainstream comprehensive school. The school does not have a special unit, but has some experience in catering for students with visual impairment and limited mobility, not including, to date, wheelchair users.

The Newport Pagnell campus does not have complete wheelchair access but can accommodate students with some mobility difficulties, and has several toilets for disabled students.

The Olney campus is designed with complete wheelchair and disability access in mind. The governors will work with the LA to improve facilities to accommodate students' particular needs. The issue of whether wheelchair access should over-ride admissions has been discussed, but it is the current school policy that Ousedale would strongly encourage parents/carers to keep their disabled children within their neighbourhood community for social reasons. Within this ethos Ousedale will strive to adapt the Newport Pagnell site to allow proper access rather than to accommodate students from Newport Pagnell at the Olney site for reasons of disability.

The school continues to strive to enable inclusion for all students with difficulties within our defined area. In addition, several groups of students, such as those with Statements/Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and Looked After Children, must be admitted from outside our area under certain circumstances. We are able to admit students with EHCPs for various types of difficulty, where additional and appropriate support arrangements, such as specialist equipment, can be made by the LA.

The site team at Ousedale respond quickly, effectively and at a personal and individual level to ensure that every possible reasonable adjustment which will help students is made. In particular, they are involved at pre-visit and induction level in getting to know students with difficulties and frequently suggest and implement adaptations independently by arrangement with students themselves.

Support in classes is allocated in proportion to the degree of students' needs and the details are recorded in students' personalised education plans. Specific skills workshops are offered in spelling, literacy, numeracy and social skills, in response to the particular needs of the current cohort. These will be offered only in exceptional circumstances as they will involve removal from the usual timetable.

### **Temporary Incapacity**

Students who are obliged to use crutches or other mobility aids are supervised by the School Matrons at Newport Pagnell and at Olney. The following is a common support pattern:

- Risk Assessment
- Reception registration
- "Five minute release" – student and friend move from room to room five minutes before/after main groups
- Risk Assessed by Matron - return to normal procedures
- In exceptional circumstances students may be allowed to work in the PILC (Personalised and Inclusive Learning Centre) if mobility is severely restricted.

## **Medical Conditions**

Students who present with an on-going and significant medical problem will have their needs assessed and addressed as part of an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP). As such the school will look to make reasonable adjustments, and implement support where it can, that enables students to access school and the curriculum as normally as is possible.

Details and arrangements for this are set out in the school's separate Supporting Students at School with Medical Conditions policy.

## **Fire procedures**

Students with disabilities are subject to the same level of care and concern as all members of Ousedale. Where students are dependent on TA or peer support for movement around the school, supporters are briefed regarding fire drills and alarms. The TA group is actively involved in all Fire Procedures and undertake Fire Monitor duties when an alarm occurs.

The site at Olney is entirely compliant with requirements for students, staff and parents with disabilities.

## **Newport Pagnell Site Challenges**

The age of the Newport Pagnell site is still recognised as being unhelpful in fulfilling obligations towards students, staff and parents/carers with disabilities involving mobility.

Some departments have no ground floor rooms. Sensitive timetabling is used to alleviate this for some students, but relies on no more than one student with mobility problems being in each year group, which is the current level of need, although other parents seeking Year 7 transfer could reject Ousedale because of this difficulty. It is recognised that where staff are not teaching in their usual rooms there are difficulties in transporting equipment at speed and in delivering lessons in unfamiliar areas.

Other curriculum difficulties are that specialist computer rooms can be on the first floor. In addition, many routes are possible for people with mobility difficulties but not desirable, in that they take very long distances around the site to obtain access.

The school canteen for younger students is not accessible for wheelchairs without circuitous routes and opening fire doors, and security gates where access is not normally advisable. Younger students with limited mobility have to be assisted to use this canteen as they are obliged to leave their walking frames outside.

### **2.3 Consultation informing the review of the plan**

The views of the following were sought and taken into account when formulating the Disability Access Plan:

Current students with disabilities  
Deputy Head - Pastoral Team and Site Co-ordination  
Teaching Assistant - SEND team  
Site Manager – responsible for site maintenance and development  
School Matron  
SENDCO

### **3.0 Priorities**

#### **3.1 Participation in the school curriculum for disabled students**

As far as any disability allows, all students have access to, and participate in, the full school curriculum. Where a disability restricts participation in certain activities i.e. sport, Middle Leaders work with the SEN department to put together an individualised plan. These measures are subject to strict criteria agreed with the Deputy Head Curriculum.

Across the school other reasonable adjustments will be made to enable participation in the curriculum. Some involve adapting the classroom or corridor environment, some providing equipment, some adjusting the timetable or lesson plan. As a general principle we aim to allow the student to control their own adjustments, and only as a last resort would a support worker be introduced to bridge a gap to enable access.

#### **3.2 Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled people can take advantage of education and associated services**

The site team are constantly evaluating the impact of the site at each campus on students who have a disability. They will continue to note improvements and adjustments made during:

- a) the course of general maintenance work, administrative work or educational planning
- b) when rooms and spaces are refurbished within the general improvement plan for the school

Major enhancements that would require considerable funding from the LA/DfE to accomplish:

Examples:

automated doors, rebuilding some stairs and landings, induction loop systems, widening corridors, reducing “pinch points” in transit areas, lifts, easy access changing rooms, enabling disabled kitchen staff, height adjustable workbenches, enlarging workshops and practical areas for wheelchair access, toilets and shower for disabled staff and students, redesign of the SEND area for all students with learning and other difficulties.

MKC’s report from the School Access Audit in 2006 acknowledged these problems, but lost clarity in the rejection of plans for a new school building for Newport Pagnell.

#### **3.3 Improving the delivery to disabled students of information that is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.**

At present all information provided in writing both in the taught curriculum and the wider information level is adapted by the SEND team as necessary for those who require alternatives. This is achieved by consulting students with special requirements and encouraging them to let us know when they anticipate problems or when things go wrong. This gives them a measure of control and responsibility which they take very seriously.

In the main this applies to students with visual difficulties or dyslexia. By far the major part of our work in adjustments is in differentiating work and in using alternative media for delivery.

Examples over recent years have included taped notes, video and audio tapes and synopses, brailled work, on-screen presentation and disk storage, enlarged print, subtitles, scribing, transcription, revision cards, overlays, word banks, portable word processors and so on.

At present we do not have in-house Braille facilities, nor any students using Braille.

Another area we look to develop is the use of voice-activated software. We have trialled the use of this with several students and hope this will continue to be a viable option for in-class, homework and, eventually, exam use to replace scribes.

We also consider how information for parents/carers, staff, and indeed governors with disabilities can be provided in the above ways should the need arise.

## **4.0 Implementation**

### **4.1 Management, co-ordination and implementation**

The SENDCO should be responsible for monitoring the implementation of all classroom and written media improvements identified.

The Site Manager should monitor improvements to the built environment needed.

This plan should be discussed with the MK SEN team, where it arises directly from the needs of individual students, and where it arises from general concerns about the needs of the community and the entitlements of all, including potential students, staff and parents.

We will review and revise the plan in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Policy and the SDP.

### **4.2 Getting hold of the school's Disability Access Plan**

A copy of this plan will be available on the school website. A large print, Braille and audio copy should be made available on request. Reference to the existence of the plan should be made in the School Prospectus, SDP and SEN Policy.

## **5.0 Monitoring and Review**

This plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Governors' Finance & Premises Committee.

Reviewed by Finance & Premises Committee 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016  
Date of Next Review March 2019