



## PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

### Public Sector Equality Duty: Context

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplified the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with. It also strengthened the law in important ways, to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The public sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Act) came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs.

The Equality Duty is supported by specific duties, set out in regulations which came into force on 10 September 2011. The specific duties require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty; and to set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives.

#### **The specific duties require public bodies to:**

- publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually; and
- set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

All information must be published in a way which makes it easy for people to access it.

Public bodies subject to the specific duties must publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty. This means that the information they publish must show that they had due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We describe these as the three aims of the Equality Duty.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Duty are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Public bodies must publish information to show that they consciously thought about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. ([www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/) )

The definition of disability under the law is a wide one:

**A disabled person is someone who has a**

*Physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.*

*The definition includes people with a Hearing or Visual Impairment, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, mental health issues and incontinence. People with ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Downs Syndrome and Hydrocephalus are included. Medical conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, severe Asthma, Diabetes, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, Sickle Cell Anaemia and HIV are deemed disabilities. Facial disfigurement, severe Dyslexia, gross obesity and diagnosed eating disorders are all included.*

*If a person has been disabled in the past (for example, cancer recoverers and people with a history of mental illness) they are still covered by the legislation for the rest of their life.*

**Walton Hall Academy: Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty**

Equality sits at the heart of Walton Hall and its purpose as a school for children and young people with physical and learning disabilities. The Public Sector Equality Duty however, has a wider remit to consider all aspects of equality as set out above.

We therefore have a responsibility to consider our equality duties with regard to:

- Our children and young people
- Our families and carers
- Our staff teams and governors
- Other professionals, students, volunteers and visitors engaged within our organization.

This document will describe the provision, systems and policies we have in place that demonstrate our compliance with our equality duty, and to set out our processes for consultation and development of this duty.

## **School Context**

Walton Hall Academy is a Shaw Education Trust special academy in Eccleshall, Staffordshire. We cater for children aged 11-19 with physical disabilities, complex medical needs, and associated sensory and learning difficulties from north Staffordshire. Walton Hall Academy is commissioned by the Local Authority as part of the Special School offer in Staffordshire.

Walton Hall has a 17 bed, residential unit providing extended day and overnight extended curriculum for our students.

We currently have 135 children on roll. (March 2017)

## **The School Offer**

Reference should be made the document “**Walton Hall Academy – Our Local Offer**” which is available on our school website and by request. This details our provision as a specialist school. Further information is also available on our school website:

<http://waltonhall.set-mat.co.uk>

## **Progress and Attainment**

We conduct an annual assessment of the progress made and attainment achieved by our children and young people. This information is collated and analysed to inform school leaders, governors and school improvement stakeholders of the successes and areas for development with regard to pupil progress.

The data analysis has due regard for disability, age, gender, ethnicity, and any other factor that may categorize a child as having additional disadvantage or needs. This includes having due regard for national requirements such as Pupil Premium, Student Bursary scheme, Free School Meals and any other entitlements designed to reduce disadvantage.

This data and its analysis inform our **School Development Plan** which is also available on request.

Reference should also be made to the school’s **Ofsted reports** which offer an independent appraisal of the school and its effectiveness as measured against national standards.

The school develops and adopts a wide range of policies and practices that underpin our commitment to our equality duty.

## **Involving disabled people**

We involve all stakeholders, including disabled people, in our consultation to help inform our planning.

This takes place in a number of ways across the school year, and as a focused survey.

- **School Council:**

A council of school students meets weekly to discuss their views on school provision. This covers safety and well-being as well as wider resource and provision requests. Council reps meet with the Headteacher to feedback meeting minutes and to consider any actions.

- **Parent Meetings:**

Various meetings including Annual Review of Statement / EHCP, tutor consultations, transition meetings and health and social care meetings that consider the education health and care needs of individual students on an on-going and regular basis. These conversations inform our provision and future planning.

Parent Support Group meets regularly to discuss common issues facing parents and their children in school.

- **School Surveys:**

Specific surveys are conducted to look at various aspects of our provision, and include focused surveys for access and inclusion. Surveys are conducted with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders.

## **Access to education, benefits, facilities and services (the whole life of the school)**

Walton Hall School is a specialist school for students aged 11-19 with special educational needs. As such, the curriculum is specially adapted to meet the wide range of needs.

Our curriculum offer is always under review, and has been recently restructured to reflect the different learning pathways our children follow. This has resulted in changes to our sensory curriculum offer, accreditation offer, and to our transition and work related learning offer.

We have 3 minibuses, one of which is fully accessible.

**Access to written information**

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening form a core aspect of our education provision. We have many strategies to support the development of English and literacy skills, including strategies to support and develop communication through signing.

Where required, resources are adapted for font-size, and colour / contrast adjustment.

**Ratified by Governors** .....

**Date** .....

DRAFT