

Status:	Regulatory
Applies to:	Whole School
SLT Reviewer (initials):	RN
Committee Monitor:	Education



## Equal Opportunities Policy

---

Independent Day and Boarding School for Girls & Boys aged 3 to 18 years

Stover School

January 2013  
Reviewed March 2019

## **Contents**

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Discrimination, victimisation and harassment
- 3 Equal Opportunities - Statement of Commitment
- 4 Policy and Planning
- 5 Employment matters
- 6 Training and development
- 7 Pupils and the curriculum
- 8 Monitoring and review
- 9 Internal management issues
- 10 Disability – staff
- 11 Disability - pupils

Appendix A - Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Appendix B - HIV/AIDS guidelines

Appendix C – Equal opportunities for pupils

Appendix D – Accessibility Strategy

## **1 Introduction**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Accessibility Strategy and its Admissions, Safeguarding, Learning Support, Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies.

It applies to all members of the school's community and all stakeholders.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It now provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all discriminations that are unlawful.

The Equality Act 2010 established nine 'protected characteristics'; age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief and sexual identity. The Act also placed general and specific duties upon all public bodies, such as local authorities, maintained schools and other state funded educational settings including children's centres and academies. The general duty requires public bodies to have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

The specific duties require local authorities and maintained schools to:

- Publish information which shows their compliance with the general duty
- Publish specific and measureable equality objectives to meet the general duty.

Private or independent schools must abide by the law but are not required to comply with the general and specific equality duties imposed on public bodies and maintained schools, listed above, although they are encouraged to do so as it will help them to establish and maintain good practice in promoting equality. It is unlawful for private and independent schools to discriminate on grounds of age, race, sex, disability or sexual orientation in admissions, access to benefits or services, exclusions, and in the employment of staff. There are some limited exceptions related to religion and belief.

## **2 Discrimination, victimisation and harassment**

Appendix A provides further information and definitions of discrimination, victimisation and harassment. Complaints relating to these matters must be dealt with promptly and investigated using the school's complaints and disciplinary procedures.

## **3 Equal Opportunities - Statement of Commitment**

The governing body and Stover School is committed to a policy of equality. We aim to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief.

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school

community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

We aim to empower our pupils to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy.

All members of the school community are responsible for promoting the school's equal opportunities policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

### **Aims and objectives**

The governing body and school, through this Equal Opportunities Policy, aims to:

- a) carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation (*The Equality Act 2010*); reinforce the school's position as a provider of high quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities;
- b) establish good people management practice and to set out an agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response;
- c) ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every pupil;
- d) ensure that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals;
- e) ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equal opportunities policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated under the disciplinary, grievance or anti-harassment procedure as appropriate). All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

## **4 Policy and planning**

Equal opportunities implications, including race equality, will be considered whenever school policies are developed or reviewed. All policies will be regularly reviewed to provide a comprehensive and consistent process of monitoring and evaluation.

## **5 Employment matters**

Appointments: in all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on professional criteria.

Family-friendly policies: the governing body/school is a family-friendly employer and will do its best to respond to the changing needs of all staff by publicising existing schemes designed to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities (parental leave arrangements, job share opportunities, carers' leave provision etc..).

HIV/AIDS: the governing body and Stover School recognises that people with HIV/AIDS suffer not only from the purely medical effects of the infection but may also experience prejudice and misunderstanding leading to unfair discrimination and victimisation. The governors and Stover School therefore will ensure that people with HIV/AIDS do not experience unfair treatment in relation to employment, as pupils or as other members of the school community. The school and governing body will follow the detailed guidelines regarding staff recruitment and pupil admissions set out in Appendix B.

Trans-sexual employees and gender reassignment: (*The Equality Act 2010*) now expressly covers discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment.

## **6 Training and development**

The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training.

The school will endeavour to:

- a) enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status;
- b) provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, on the basis of their assessed training needs;
- c) promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which staff, governors, parents/guardians and pupils can make;
- d) equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions, discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote anti-discriminatory behaviour generally.

Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. The school places great importance on the relationship between team leaders and their teams and will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of the school's performance management system.

## **7 Pupils and the curriculum**

The school follows admission policies that do not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The school's aim is to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin. *The Education Reform Act 1988* stated that 'the

school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which pupils belong and of which they will become adult members.’ Pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all pupils. Equality of opportunity should inform the whole of the curriculum and be reviewed regularly.

Equal opportunities issues will be taken account of in planning the curriculum. This is reflected in curriculum planning documentation. The current Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils is enclosed at Appendix C.

## **8 Monitoring and review**

Monitoring in respect to employment begins with a commitment to equal opportunities being flagged in all adverts for vacancies at the school. The application pack then offers a commitment to reasonable adjustments for all applicants as part of the selection process. Finally, applicants are asked to complete a medical reference on point of employment; this triggers the school in making the necessary reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employee. A review of employment will be considered termly through the Personnel & Welfare Committee, taking note of such issues as are listed below and taking appropriate action to ensure that no discrimination is taking place within the work place

- a) recruitment trends;
- b) training opportunities;
- c) promotion patterns;
- d) complaints, grievance, disciplinary and harassment procedures;
- e) take-up of family-friendly policies, e.g. flexible working arrangements.

Monitoring in respect of pupils begins with their data, as declared on their Application Form for a place at the school. This data is reviewed annually and reported to Department for Education as part of its annual School Census.

Compliance with Section 10 of the Equality Act 2010 is set out in the school’s policy document ‘Accessibility Strategy to increase access for disabled students 2015-2018’ (see appendix D), which includes the latest 3 year plans.

Governors will ensure that this policy is reviewed regularly.

## **9 Internal management issues**

This policy is primarily designed to address pupil admissions, curriculum and employment aspects of governance and management. However, in reviewing and developing it further, the Governors, Head and members of the Senior Leadership Team will take a range of other internal

issues into account. Many of those issues will already be the subject of detailed agreed policies. All such existing policies, therefore, will also be 'audited' from an equal opportunities perspective.

## 10 Disability - staff Policy

Stover School welcomes applications from people with disabilities, values the contribution of existing staff with disabilities, and will treat staff fairly should they become disabled. The overall purpose of this policy is to develop and maintain a working environment, and to offer terms and conditions of service, which will enable suitably qualified persons with a disability to seek and maintain employment with the School wherever practicable. The policy aims to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

### Scope

This policy applies to all applicants, new recruits and existing members of staff regardless of their contract type. This policy should be applied in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy and the Equal Opportunities Policy. Staff should also make themselves aware of the school's approach to pupils with a disability. All employees of the School have a responsibility to comply with this policy.

### Legislation

The Equality Act (2010)

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people who have a disability relation to employment, goods, facilities, services and education.

Discrimination can occur in two ways:

- (i) For a reason relating to a person's disability, the employer treats that person less favourably than the employer treats, or would treat, others to whom the reason does not apply AND the employer cannot show that this treatment is justified.
- (ii) Where an employer fails to comply with a duty of reasonable adjustment imposed in relation to the disabled person AND cannot show that this failure is justified.

Duty to Adjust:

There is a statutory duty under the Act to make *reasonable* adjustments to both working practices and the working environment, to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged in comparison with someone who does not have a disability. E.g. purchase of an adapted computer or software; re-allocating duties within a team; altering working hours; altering the direction a door opens for wheelchair access.

### Responsibilities

Employer: The School is responsible for the health, training and development and terms and conditions of its staff, and for ensuring that there are fair and consistent procedures in place in order to fulfil this responsibility, and for ensuring that appropriate resources are available.

Managers: Overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy lies with the Head. Heads of Department have responsibility for implementation of the policy in their Department;

Employees: Employees of the School are expected to be aware of this policy and to treat those with disabilities with respect and in accordance with these provisions. Training and awareness briefings are offered through Staff Development Programmes. Employees who become disabled while employed are invited to inform the Head in writing immediately.

## **Confidentiality**

All applicants are asked on issue of a conditional offer of employment to disclose if they have a disability so that reasonable adjustments can be considered. This information is restricted to those making the appointment. The Act does not prevent a disabled person keeping a disability confidential, however, it is explained to new recruits, or current staff on becoming disabled, that if they choose to keep their disability confidential, this may have implications for the degree of adjustments that can be made for them.

## **Recruitment and selection**

### Recruitment

The school

- welcomes applications from people with disabilities,
- will encourage applicants who are invited to interview to disclose any disability or to request any reasonable adjustments for the interview stage,
- will interview applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a vacancy and consider them on their abilities,
- will make reasonable adjustments to both working practices and the working environment to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged in comparison with others to whom the reason does not or would not apply,
- will take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to foster an inclusive community,
- will review its policy and plan ways to improve it.

### Selection

When drawing up Person Specifications, care will be taken to distinguish between the essential and desirable criteria to be used to consider applications for posts. All applicants who disclose a disability are entitled to interview if they meet the essential criteria. At selection, interviewers will look at the ability of someone to perform the job, and focus on the Person Specification. In that way, decisions on appointments will be based solely on merit.



## Training

Wherever reasonable and practicable, adjustments will be made to enable all staff with a disability to have access to training and development opportunities.

## Facilities

Car Parking: Disabled Staff who find they have access difficulties should apply to the Bursar for allocation of reserved bays for disabled drivers/passengers.

Room Allocation: Disabled teachers should discuss the allocation of suitable teaching rooms with disabled (wheelchair) access or requiring reasonable adjustment with the Deputy Head (Senior School) or the Head of the Preparatory School (SPS) who are responsible for their respective Timetables.

It is the responsibility of those who arrange meetings and seminars to ensure that they use a room which is accessible and suitable to staff with mobility needs, and with visual or hearing impairment. If this is not possible, it is the responsibility of the organiser to make this clear in all publicity, and to offer to make alternative arrangements where possible. Clutter in rooms, and in corridors, is one of the greatest detriments to people with various forms of disability. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that rooms and corridors are kept clear and accessible.

## Physical access

The School recognises that access to many buildings is difficult and is actively trying to improve access around the site and to the buildings, subject to the restrictions placed on the school. A comprehensive access audit was carried out in 2014 by the Bursar, taking forward the original Access Audit conducted in 2004 by Capita, following which an accessibility assessment for the school was drawn up, identifying areas which require upgrading/improvement to make the site more accessible for disabled people. This assessment acts as an on-going plan of work and, since 2011, a number of improvements identified in the plan have been implemented.

Any new building works or conversions will have regard to Part M of the Building Regulations in respect of access to and use of buildings by less able bodied people; additionally, the school will look beyond these rules to ensure that as much provision as possible is made for less able bodied people when carrying out works of new construction or conversions. For further information, contact the Bursar.

## Retention

The School will aim to continue employing any individual who becomes disabled and will explore ways in which this can be achieved with as much flexibility as is operationally possible. If such a situation arises, employees and managers should seek advice as soon as possible from the Head who will contact the school's Occupational Health Consultant.

Staff who become disabled whilst employed by the School, may be eligible for Travel to Work Grants and/or Access to Work Grants. The School will consider reasonable adjustments and alternatives to enable a person to remain employed, for example:

- a) continuing in the same post, with reasonable adjustments;
- b) Redeployment, with training if necessary (to other Departments or Sections if appropriate).

If neither of these is possible, then the School will enter into a consultation process regarding options, which will include:

- a) Premature retirement on grounds of incapacity;
- b) Termination of employment on grounds of incapacity.

### **Harassment**

Harassing a person with a disability on account of that disability is unacceptable behaviour, contravening the terms of the Equality Act. Any employee found to have harassed a work colleague with disability will be subject to disciplinary process.

### **Grievance procedure**

Any employee who considers that s\he has been treated unfairly, discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of their disability may raise a grievance through the School's Grievance procedures.

### **Monitoring and review**

Employees with a known disability will be consulted annually to ensure their individual situation is being treated appropriately. Staff known to have a disability will receive individual, confidential letters in this regard. Ways will be sought to invite other members of staff who consider they have a disability-related need to make their situation known to the Head.

## **11 Disability – pupils**

### **Scope**

The School's policy aims to:-

- Support Stover School, which exists to provide all-round education for each pupil in its care.
- Respect the rights of those disabled pupils we admit, and to provide equal access to the curriculum, extra-curricular and other services.
- Equally value and encourage each of our pupils.
- Foster a positive attitude towards disability within our community.
- Notwithstanding the above, and the School's desire to enrich the lives of all pupils by pursuing an inclusive policy, which reflects the diversity of the outside world and

our Christian values, the School places equal importance on ensuring that no pupil's education and progress is impaired by the behaviour of another pupil.

- To achieve our aims, the School will:-
  - i. Review the School's Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan at least every three years.
  - ii. Make recommendations for improving the accessibility of its education to pupils or prospective pupils with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments.

### **Admission to the school**

- Admission depends on prospective pupils meeting the School's entry criteria to maintain and, if possible, to improve the educational and general standards for all its pupils.
- The School must feel reasonably sure that, throughout the pupil's time at School, it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of his/her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers.
- The School will apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils, regardless of any disability of which it is made aware by parents. The School has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared with other pupils, who are not disadvantaged by disability.
- The School invites parents to disclose the disability of a prospective pupil at the earliest occasion during admission interviews or in a meeting with the Head.
- In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the School may take such advice and require such assessments, for example a report from an Educational Psychologist or doctor, and make recommendations as it regards as appropriate.
- With prior notification of disability, supported by the recommendation of an appropriate professional, the School will make reasonable adjustments, including up to 25% extra time, in the entrance exam for prospective pupils with a disability. Word processing facilities will be available, if deemed necessary by an Educational Psychologist.

### **Education**

- Teachers will continue to be made aware of pupils with Disability or Special Learning Needs through "Learning Support Information" Files. Parents are required to complete a form detailing any special educational or emotional needs. These requirements will then be communicated to all the relevant teachers.
- Teachers will continue to be made aware of strategies to make "reasonable adjustments" within the classroom so as not to place disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the curriculum.

- Teachers are expected to adapt their teaching to the learning patterns and styles of all the pupils according to their abilities and needs.
- The implementation of reasonable adjustments to classroom management, teaching and expectations, should not prejudice the progress of other pupils, nor their health or welfare. Laboratories, workshops and sports facilities are areas of potential risk.
- Teachers will continue to support disabled children through their individual education plans as drawn up by the School's Head of Learning Support and other appropriate staff.
- Access arrangements for individual pupils (extra time, use of a laptop, use of a bilingual dictionary, use of a scribe and/or reader) will be applied for, and implemented, in public examinations. Such arrangements will also be used, when appropriate, in internal school examinations.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

- In order to implement reasonable adjustments, the school endeavours to:
  - Plan ahead;
  - Identify potential barriers;
  - Work collaboratively with disabled people;
  - Identify practical solutions through a problem solving approach;
  - Ensure staff have the necessary skills;
  - Monitor the effects of adjustments;
  - Recognise the importance of home-school partnership and look to parents to inform the school at the earliest opportunity if they or their child has a disability;
  - Consider the effect of any proposed change upon all members of the school community and the available resources.

### **Sporting and recreational activities**

- The School will continue to provide equal access to all activities for disabled pupils, within the constraints of the physical nature of the site, the budgetary costs, the Health and Safety implications and difficulties of supervision.
- Individual Risk Assessment and management strategies will be provided for disabled pupils engaged in school trips or visits.

### **Welfare awareness**

- Teachers and pupils will be made aware of disability and understand its effects and accept and support disabled pupils as part of school life. This should form part of the School's Inservice training programme.
- Appropriate Staff INSET will be provided on a regular basis to enhance understanding of disability, the need for making reasonable adjustments in

compliance with our legal duties and to improve our educational provision.

- The School's Equal Opportunities Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, pupil and staff handbooks, will reflect inclusiveness and the difficulties faced by disabled pupils, thereby improve understanding and integration.
- The School will agree with parents appropriate, regular means of communication with regard to the pupil's progress, behavioural issues and the effects of any medication.

### **Physical access**

- Parents should be aware that the School includes a number of historic buildings, listed as grade II\* by English Heritage and protected under planning legislation. The site covers a wide area with many buildings of more than one storey and without lifts. Like other schools, the School has subject areas with designated classrooms. This requires pupils to move around the site, necessitating the use of steps or stairs in buildings to access classrooms. Pupils with impaired mobility may, therefore, be disadvantaged by these problems, and may therefore be prevented from access to a number of the educational and other facilities the School offers.
- The school will take account of the needs of pupils and other users with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. However, it should be recognised that some problems of access may be unsolvable as they involve major alterations at prohibitive cost.
- Under current legislation the school is not required to remove or alter physical features.

## Appendix A:

### Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is illegal. However, for the school community, discrimination is also unacceptable on any of the other grounds referred to in this policy statement. Failure to comply with the policy will be fully and promptly investigated using the appropriate procedures.

There are four ways in which discrimination may occur:

1. **Direct discrimination:** This means treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex etc
2. **Indirect discrimination:** This means applying a requirement or condition which cannot be justified to all groups but which has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of that group which can comply is smaller than the proportion of the group(s) which can comply with it.
3. **Victimisation:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because that person has done a 'protected act' under the Equality Act (2010), for example, by bringing forward proceedings or giving evidence or information.
4. **Harassment:** Harassment can take many forms, from the most obvious abusive remarks to extremely subtle use of power. As with unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment can be intentional or unintentional. However, the key issue is not simply the intention of the offender but the impact of the behaviour on the person receiving it.

Harassment may involve any of the following:

- a) physical contact or violence;
- b) offensive humiliating and intimidating remarks or actions;
- c) exclusion from participation in job-related or classroom-related discussions, training or social or other events;
- d) unfair work allocation;
- e) unjust or excessive or humiliating criticism of performance;
- f) offensive signs or notices;
- g) graffiti;
- h) repeated demands or requests for sexual favours.

These are merely examples and not an exhaustive list. Whatever the form, the school will provide support for any member of the school community, pupil or staff member who feels threatened or isolated because of such actions.

## Appendix B: HIV/AIDS guidelines

The governors and Stover School will:

- a) ensure that job applicants who are deemed to be medically fit to perform the job for which they have applied, are not denied an offer of work solely because they are HIV positive. In arriving at the decision, the school's normal recruitment criteria will be observed including the normal medical procedures;
- b) ensure, where possible, that resources are available to support employees or pupils with AIDS or other major health problems associated with HIV infection. The school's normal rules and procedures regarding counselling and ill health will apply in such cases;
- c) give positive consideration to applications for unpaid leave for those with responsibility for caring for people with AIDS-related conditions in accordance with carers' leave arrangements;
- d) treat any breaches of confidentiality as a serious matter to be dealt with in accordance with the normal disciplinary (or other appropriate) procedure;
- e) provide appropriate information in relation to AIDS in order to combat fears and prejudice and to enable the school community as a whole to function without risk to health.

## Appendix C:

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR PUPILS

#### Introduction

Stover School is committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. Our aim is to equip pupils with an awareness of our diverse society and to appreciate the value of difference. This will be achieved by adherence to the following principles:

- Discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, origin, sex or ability is not acceptable.
- Discrimination against a pupil who is pregnant is not acceptable.
- Discrimination against a pupil who is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment is not acceptable.
- The primary objective of this school will be to educate, develop and prepare all our pupils for life, whatever their sex, colour, origin, culture or ability.

Pupils and teachers will further these principles by contributing towards a happy and caring environment and by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.

**The Aims and Values** which underpin this policy are:

- to offer sound learning within the Christian tradition;
- to provide an attractive, stimulating environment where each child endeavours to achieve the highest standards;
- To accommodate dietary requirements on the basis of religion or culture.
- an environment for growth in spiritual, moral, social and cultural strengths;
- the development of an enquiring mind, self-respect and self-motivation, combined with appreciation of the attitudes, viewpoints and beliefs of others, leading to mutual understanding and respect for each other's differences and strengths.

We believe that with these aims a child will develop a willingness and desire to learn, work and enjoy school life. We also believe that achievement of our aims depends on a successful partnership between parents, children and teachers, all sharing in a common desire for learning.

All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable. Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in school. Staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes.

Equality of opportunity permeates the whole curriculum and will be reviewed regularly.



Status:	Regulatory
Applies to:	Whole School
SLT Reviewer (initials):	PJ/RN
Committee Monitor:	F&GP

Appendix D :



Accessibility Strategy to increase access for disabled students Sept 2019 – 2021 (following on from Accessibility Plan Sept 2015 – 2018)

---

Independent Day and Boarding School for Girls and Boys aged 3 to 18 Years

Stover School

September 2011  
Last Reviewed Sept 2019

The Head of Learning Support is the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities coordinator. Any reference to the Head of Learning Support includes Educational Needs and Disabilities.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This strategy is drawn up to help the school fulfil its obligations to disabled pupils and to ensure that all pupils have full access to teaching and education.

## 2. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

"A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

## 3. LEGISLATION

There are three main strands of legislation which support disabled pupils:

1. The SEN framework (Part IV of the Education Act 1996);
2. Equality Act duties and,
3. Planning duties (sections 28D -28E of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

## 4. SCHOOLS ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

The School's strategy is formulated around the three main strands of legislation outlined in item 3 above:

### 4.1 The SEN framework

The purpose of the SEN framework is to meet the special educational needs of individual children, some of whom may be disabled, who need provision that is additional to, or different from, provision normally available in schools.

The school meets these needs by having a dedicated learning support section headed up by the full time Head of Learning Support to provide learning support to all areas of the school. The Schools SEND policy provides guidance to parents and pupils on the SEN framework and the measures in place to support pupils. The SEN code provides teachers with a Learning Support Information file with information on the needs of individual pupils. Individual Education plans (IEPs) are prepared where necessary and reasonable adjustment agreed and implemented where appropriate.

In addition to the SEND code the school has an Equal Opportunities policy which operates to:

- Support Stover School, which exists to provide all-round education for each pupil in its care.
- Respect the rights of those disabled pupils we admit, and to provide equal access to the curriculum, extra-curricular and other services.
- Equally value and encourage each of our pupils.
- Foster a positive attitude towards disability within our community.
- Notwithstanding the above, and the School's desire to enrich the lives of all pupils by pursuing an inclusive policy, which reflects the diversity of the outside world and our Christian values, the School places equal importance on ensuring that no pupil's education and progress is impaired by the behaviour of another pupil.

A Working Group, comprising the Bursar, The Estates manager, other HoD's, and the Head of Learning Support, operating within the scope of the Health & Safety Committee, will:-

- i) Review the School's Disability Policy and Accessibility Strategy at least every three years.
- ii) Make recommendations with a view to improving the accessibility of its education to pupils or prospective pupils with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments.

## **4.2 The Disability Discrimination Duties**

SENDA 2001 requires schools not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their arrangements for

- 1 admissions and exclusions
- 2 the provision of education and associated services and
- 3 allowing for reasonable adjustment

The School must not treat disabled pupils less favorably than other pupils and must take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty).

### **4.2.1 Admissions and Exclusions**

- Admission depends on prospective pupils meeting the School's entry criteria to maintain and, if possible, to improve the educational and general standards for all its pupils.
- The School must feel reasonably sure that, throughout the pupil's time at School, it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of his/her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers.

- The School will apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils, regardless of any disability of which it is made aware by parents. The School has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared with other pupils, who are not disadvantaged by disability.
- The School invites parents to disclose the disability and SEN of a prospective pupil at the earliest occasion during admission process.
- In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the School may take such advice and require such assessments, for example a report from an Educational Psychologist or a doctor, and make recommendations as it regards as appropriate
- With prior notification of disability, supported by the recommendation of an appropriate professional, the School will make reasonable adjustments, including up to 25% extra time, in the entrance exam for prospective pupils with a disability. Word processing facilities will be available, if deemed necessary by an Educational Psychologist.

#### **4.2.2 Provision of education and associated services**

- Teachers will continue to be made aware of pupils with Disability or Special Learning Needs through "Learning Support Information" Files. Parents are required to complete a form detailing any special educational or emotional needs. These requirements will then be communicated to all the relevant teachers.
- The implementation of reasonable adjustments to classroom management, teaching and expectations, should not prejudice the progress of other pupils, nor their health or welfare. Laboratories, workshops and sports facilities are areas of potential risk.
- Teachers will continue to support disabled children through their individual education plans as drawn up by the School's Head of Learning Support and other appropriate staff.
- The School is a strong advocate of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and will always try to involve interested pupils in this activity. Staffing ratios can be adjusted to provide extra help when necessary. Occasionally it may be considered that the welfare of the pupil with a particular disability cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of the disability and the specific environment and the terrain. In such circumstances it may not be possible to provide a suitable level of supervision and care to enable the pupil to participate in the activity safely.
- The School will continue to provide equal access to all activities for disabled pupils, within the constraints of the physical nature of the site, the budgetary costs, the Health and Safety implications and difficulties of supervision.
- Individual Risk Assessment and management strategies will be provided for disabled pupils engaged in school trips or visits

### 4.2.3 Reasonable adjustment

A working document on reasonable adjustments for pupils having one of the more commonly encountered conditions (such as ADD, ADHD, Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, hearing or visual impairments etc..) is incorporated within the Learning Support Information file, available to all teachers.

In order to implement reasonable adjustments, the school endeavours to:

- Plan ahead;
- Identify potential barriers;
- Work collaboratively with disabled people;
- Identify practical solutions through a problem solving approach;
- Ensure staff have the necessary skills;
- Monitor the effects of adjustments;
- Recognise the importance of home-school partnership and look to Parents to inform the school at the earliest opportunity if they or their child has a disability;
- Consider the effect of any proposed change upon all members of the school community and the available resources.

## 4.3 The Planning Duty on Schools

Section 28D SENDA 2001 requires that an accessibility plan be drawn up over a prescribed period to:

1. increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum
2. improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school
3. improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

### 4.3.1 Access to curriculum

- Teachers will continue to be made aware of strategies to make "reasonable adjustments" within the classroom so as not to place disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the curriculum
- Access arrangements for individual pupils (extra time, use of a bilingual dictionary, use of a scribe and/or reader) will be applied for, and implemented, in public examinations. Such arrangements will also be used, when appropriate, in internal school examinations.
- Teachers are expected to adapt their teaching to the learning patterns and styles of all the pupils according to their abilities and needs.
- The School, as an independent school, is not required under legislation to provide auxiliary support such as a classroom assistant or auxiliary aids e.g.: laptops or hearing

loops, although our current practice is to provide as much support as each individual pupil requires, within budget funding limits

- The Deputy Head and the Head of Learning Support will continue to closely monitor the educational attainment of disabled children to help ensure that they are adequately accessing the curriculum.
- Teachers and pupils will be made aware of disability and understand its effects and accept and support disabled pupils as part of school life. This should form part of the School's Inset training programme.
- Appropriate Staff Inset will be provided on a regular basis to enhance understanding of disability, the need for making reasonable adjustments in compliance with our legal duties and to improve our educational provision.
- The School's Equal Opportunities Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, pupil and staff handbooks, will reflect inclusiveness and the difficulties faced by disabled pupils, thereby improve understanding and integration.
- The School will agree with parents appropriate, regular means of communication with regard to the pupil's progress, behavioural issues and the effects of any medication.

The school will continue to invest in classroom technology to facilitate increased access to teaching content and educational material. The school will also continue to provide INSET to staff to support them in better communication with pupils who have disabilities or SEN.

#### **4.3.2 Physical Environment**

- The school has a number of historic buildings, listed as grade II\* by English Heritage and protected under planning legislation. The site covers a wide area with many buildings of more than one storey and without lifts. Like other schools, the School has subject areas with designated classrooms. This requires pupils to move around the site, necessitating the use of steps or stairs in buildings to access classrooms. Pupils with impaired mobility may, therefore, be disadvantaged by these problems, and may therefore be prevented from access to a number of the educational and other facilities the School offers.
- In cases of mobility difficulty the school will look to arrange accommodating timetable and rooming provisions for pupil(s) in question, as far as is practicable and within reasonable cost bounds.
- The school will take account of the needs of pupils and other users with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. However, it should be recognised that some problems of access may be unsolvable as they involve major alterations at prohibitive cost.

Under the legislation the school is not required to remove or alter physical features.

Nevertheless, the school continues to make improvements to the site to improve access and has an up to date assessment of the physical environment (attached at Annex A) identifying areas of weakness and an associated improvement plan.

#### **4.3.3 Written Material**

The school, subject to financial constraints, continues to invest in technology and to use technology to help pupils and the wider school:

- The school has recently replaced all its front line PC's (complete with screens and keyboards etc.,) for pupil use, invested in 25+ laptops, a further 20 Chrome laptops, and a further 10 Apple iPads . ALL newly fitted out classrooms have integrated smart boards within school to provide a more flexible approach to communication of information to all pupils.
- The school has commissioned a new school web site which will support individual student accounts and allow pupils to access school data or contact a teacher to request educational material.
- The school has increased printing and copying capacity to support large font prints of teaching or exam material as required.

### **5. Accountability**

The Schools aims to continually enhance the learning environment for all pupils and to consider this and the needs of disabled pupils at staff inset days. It is school policy that The Accessibility Strategy should be reviewed every three years and presented to the Board of Governors for approval.

## Access to curriculum

1. **Teachers will continue to be made aware of strategies to make "reasonable adjustments" within the classroom so as not to place disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the curriculum**
  - Teachers have been issued with individual education plans which provide information on individual students with SEN, any strategies to consider, access arrangements and helpful strategies to use with those students
  - There have been several INSET days either informing staff about SEN students in the different year groups or focussed on specific areas of SEN including: Literacy Difficulties and strategies, Slow Processing, Differentiation in the classroom, Attachment issues, Autistic Spectrum Disorders etc.

2. **Access arrangements for individual pupils (extra time, use of a bilingual dictionary, use of a scribe and/or reader) will be applied for, and implemented, in public examinations. Such arrangements will also be used, when appropriate, in internal school examinations**

There is a comprehensive screening process currently in place testing students in Year 7 and Year 9 as well as new students in other year groups to establish if there are any difficulties in Literacy or Maths and students with low scores will be assessed more in depth. If school assessments can provide enough data to put access arrangements in place this will be done and staff informed. Otherwise parents might be recommended to get an Educational Psychologist assessment to establish if there are any other problems.

- ⇒ All access arrangements, where practicable, are used for internal school examinations as well as for end of unit tests.
- ⇒ Additional small rooms have been provided in the LS area to cater for the right conditions for exams.

3. **Teachers are expected to adapt their teaching to the learning patterns and styles of all the pupils according to their abilities and needs.**
  - Based on information from the education plan, the INSET days and continuous communication between teaching staff and LS staff lessons are currently adapted to the various needs of the SEN students.

4. **The School, as an independent school, is not required under legislation to provide auxiliary support such as a classroom assistant or auxiliary aids e.g.: laptops or hearing loops, although our current practice is to provide as much support as each individual pupil requires, within budget funding limits**

- ⇒ In Prep school there are Teaching Assistants attached to certain classes. Individual support through Learning Support Assistants is currently either paid by the Council through statements or if statements are not in place by parents.
- ⇒ SEN students can use the facilities e.g. computers, printers, learning resources while doing homework or studying in the LS department. Laptops are provided, where appropriate, for lessons, for exams, tests and assessment but students are encouraged



to bring into school their own laptops which can be stored in the LS office if it is found to be advantageous for them for extended writing.

**5. The Head of Learning Support will continue to closely monitor the educational attainment of SEN/disabled children to help ensure that they are adequately accessing the curriculum.**

⇒ The Head of LS will provide the Deputy Head with all screening results as well as any information that has come out of Educational Psychologist assessments or information from parents.

The Head of LS will hold meetings with parents of students with SEN either to update them or advise about any arising concerns. Individual needs are discussed such as options, individual learning programmes (e.g. vocational course), change of subjects (e.g. dropping a language in Yr 7-9 or dropping a subject in Yr 10 or 11 to allow additional time for homework and study).

**6. Teachers and pupils will be made aware of disability and understand its effects and accept and support disabled pupils as part of school life. This should form part of the School's In-service training programme.**

⇒ See point 1

⇒ One of the five school development goals, which appear at the head of all academic and departmental agendas, is to focus on differentiation through Value Added tracking and within that, to make suitable provision for SEN pupils (amongst others).

**7. Appropriate Staff Inset will be provided on a regular basis to enhance understanding of disability, the need for making reasonable adjustments in compliance with our legal duties and to improve our educational provision.**

⇒ See point 1

**8. The School's Equal Opportunities Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, pupil and staff handbooks, will reflect inclusiveness and the difficulties faced by disabled pupils, thereby improving understanding and integration.**

**9. The School will agree with parents appropriate, regular means of communication with regard to the pupil's progress, behavioural issues and the effects of any medication.**

Parents receive school reports and grades on a regular basis as well as IEPs to review twice per year. Parents' evenings are held once per year where parents can discuss progress and any other issues regarding their children. In addition the Head of LS contacts parents on a regular basis to keep them informed, however, quite a number of parents choose to be in more regular contact with the LS team, through regular phone calls, meetings or emails.

In the future the school will continue to invest in classroom technology to facilitate increased access to teaching content and educational material. The school will also continue to provide inset to staff to support them in providing for pupils who have disabilities or SEN.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT - STOVER SCHOOL 3Year Plan 2019 - 2021 (supercedes the 2018 plan)**

This assessment forms part of the Accessibility Strategy where there is a requirement for the school to draw up a plan to improve the physical environment to help less able / disabled children (or staff) with access around the premises and to more easily access educational needs. This document also serves to indicate that the school has fully considered access for all users of the school in an around the premises with consequent recommendations for improvements where necessary. The rating system used RAG, with GREEN being a very low restriction to access and RED being very high, requiring immediate action or remedy and AMBER, work in progress.

AREA	UNMITIGATED RATING	ACTIONS REQUIRED	POSS	TIMESCALE				MITIGATED RATING
			COST	IMMEDIATE	WITHIN 1 Yr	1Yr +	3Yrs +	
<b>1.1 MANSION HOUSE</b>								
Path leading on from Mansion House garden to 6th Form becomes muddy and slippery when wet/ in Winter		new stairway to be installed	£2,000		X			
		Anti slip decking to be installed	£5,000		X			
Low Level Bannister		catch netting to be installed	£5,000	X				
Access to ALL Mansion House floors not possible for severely impaired		no lift facility poss. Due to cost, access and heritage issues	?					
Width of doorways		poss new entrance door to side subject to planning	£750		X			
Lack of Accessible toilets		Jubilee, Science and Pavillion only	£10,000				X	
<b>1.2 PARK HOUSE</b>								
Access to floors not possible for severely impaired		no lift poss due to access, cost, and likley heritage issues	?					
Lack of accessible toilets		looking at options	£10,000				X	
<b>1.3 PREP SCHOOL / CLOCK HOUSE</b>								
Road leading away from Prep school past old tennis courts has a gully down one side which is a potential hazard		paint reflective white lines along	£3,000		X			
Stairs and handrails - some are lose		repair / replacement	£500	X				
carpets frayed - some classrooms have old carpet which is end of life		termly replacement program	£4,000		X			
Toilets - lack of accessible + too many across this site. Some not working		whole site review ongoing. Old boarding could be accessible	?				X	
<b>1.4</b>								
Road leading away from Prep school - gully, part covered part open		paint reflective white lines	£3,000		X			
<b>1.5</b>								
Cobbles in quad are uneven and can cause particular difficulty or hazard.		heirtgae issues. Only option is to overlay. Heritage issues	?					
<b>TEMP CLASSROOMS</b>								
<b>1.7</b>								
Pathways leading between Devon Ladies, uneven only 2 have ramps		Repairs	£2,500		X			
floor damage		more ramps						
Ramps not easily identified for visulaly impaired		Repairs underway. One completed		X				
		White paint edging required	£150	X				
<b>1.6 SCIENCE BUILDING</b>								
Failure of lift		New electronics ordered	£4,000	X				
Signage to improve transit for visually impaired		Clear directional signs and internal room markings	£500	X				
<b>1.7 6TH FORM BUILDING</b>								
no lift		no solution due to cost as yet and poss heritage issues	?					
wheel chair accessibility		Clear floor areas		X				
<b>1.8 JUBILEE &amp; CHAMBER HALLS</b>								
exit doors / fire doors		repairs / replacment	£2,500	X				
<b>1.9 TARMAC DRIVEWAYS</b>								
Potholes		temp repairs only. Full resurfacing reqd but cost issue	£100,000			X		
contd								
<b>EXTERNALS</b>								
<b>1.10 PATHWAYS</b>								
To Science and 6th form - part gravel and part decking areas can prove difficult when wet		gravel being replaced and areras resurfaced	£2,500	X				
<b>1.11 SPORTS</b>								
Access to Pavillion good but tennis court cover has level issues		small ramps to overcome levels	£100	x				
Playing fields not suitable if wet		All weather Astro	£500,000				X	
<b>1.12 GENERAL</b>								
lighting Internal and External needs updating for visually impaired		full replacement and ehancement program in place	£5,000	X				
Signage Internal and External needs updating for visually impaired		full replacement and ehancement program in place	£1,000	X				
Fire Alarms		More audible and visual response around whole site reqd	£6,000	x				

