

# **POLAM HALL SCHOOL**

## **DISABILITIES POLICY**

### **Preamble**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and placed new legal duties on schools relating to all pupils or prospective pupils with disabilities. The Governing Body of Polam Hall School takes these responsibilities seriously, and is developing a policy to ensure that they are met.

We note that

- ‘disability’ and ‘special educational needs’ refer to different, yet possibly overlapping needs; not all children who are defined as having a disability will have SEN
- ‘discrimination’ is defined not only as treating disabled pupils less favourably because of their disability, but also failing to take “reasonable steps” to ensure that such pupils or prospective pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with their non-disabled peers; it is important, therefore, to consider the actual and potential needs of present and future pupils
- we are not under a duty to make adjustments to physical features, if such changes would require significant funding, if they would harm standards, if they are impractical, if the health and safety of other pupils would be compromised. The Act refers primarily to the three Ps:
  - policies
  - procedures
  - practices
- the PPPs should be regularly reviewed
- there is a need to ensure that staff receive appropriate guidance and do not act in any way as to render the Governors liable to a claim for discrimination.

### **Range of Disabilities 2008 - 2009**

We recognise that in future years pupils may join the school with other disabilities, but at this stage in the development of our policies and procedures it is helpful to have a clear idea of current needs. Polam Hall has recently had or currently has pupils with the following disabilities:

- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Dyspraxia - and other motor co-ordination problems
- Autism/Aspergers
- Irlen Syndrome - necessitates using coloured overlays or coloured glasses
- Cerebral Palsy
- Epilepsy
- Asthma
- Physical Difficulties eg brittle bones
- Special Medical Needs
- Special Emotional Needs
- Specific Learning Difficulties - Dyslexia
- General Learning Difficulties

- The Head, Bursar and Senco (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) will annually carry out a detailed survey of the school premises reviewing access. Once completed, this audit will inform the Premises and Accommodation Development Plan, so that any work needed to facilitate access for disabled pupils may be identified, assessed and prioritised.

## **Areas of potential discrimination for pupils and prospective pupils and how they will be considered**

### **Admissions**

The admissions policy does not discriminate against a disabled person. The criteria relevant are simply that a child is able to benefit from the education on offer at Polam Hall. We may occasionally advise parents that we are unable to meet the specific needs of their child. The governors would not refuse to accept an application from a disabled child, and the application would be considered against the same criteria as for any child.

### **Exclusions**

The Head would not exclude a disabled child simply on the basis of that child's disability; however, if the disability led to the child causing harm to other children or to their education, then steps would have to be taken to deal with that.

### **Educational Experiences**

This heading covers all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities and school trips. Provision under this section involves the following management actions:

- raising awareness of all staff (teaching and support) and governors to their responsibilities
- providing training where necessary, particularly for staff leading school trips or running extra-curricular activities
- reviewing policies, procedures and practices
- planning for and making 'reasonable adjustments'
- ensuring that procedures are in place to monitor potential discrimination

Specific areas of potential discrimination include:

- preparation for entry to school
- the curriculum
- teaching and learning
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- extra-curricular activities and visits
- sports
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- school meals
- interaction with peers
- assessment and examination arrangements
- school discipline and sanctions

Broadly the above may be considered in two main groups:

### **1. Access to the curriculum**

Examples include:

- Differentiation of materials appropriate to ability and need:
  - Enlarged and/or modified text
  - Use of coloured paper instead of white
  - Use of coloured pens on white boards
  - Size of writing on boards
- Allowance for appropriate seating and posture (including use of lab stools)
- Allowance for use of lap-top and other ICT equipment
- Appropriate lighting to eliminate glare off whiteboards
- Use of specialist equipment in Science, Technology, Art, PE etc.
- Employment of classroom assistants

### **2. Access to buildings and environment**

Examples include:

- Steps, posts and protrusions marked with yellow or white lines exterior and interior
- Handrails extending round corners along exterior and interior steps and ramps
- Easy access through doors and long corridors
- Grab rails in changing rooms
- Provision of disabled toilets
- Possibility of installing lifts

Our duty is not to treat disabled children less favourably than others. Discrimination can occur in two possible ways:

- Treating a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably, for a reason relating to his/her disability, than someone to whom that reason does not apply, without justification
- Failing to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils or prospective pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their non-disabled peers without justification – this is the ‘reasonable adjustments duty’ (although schools are not required to provide auxiliary aids or services, or remove or alter physical features).

Polam Hall is committed to fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to SENDA (see separate 3-year plan)

I recommend that the Governing Body establishes procedures for monitoring and reporting on issues associated with Disability Discrimination.

**Signed**

**Chair**

**Head**