

# Wargrave House School



**MRS SHEILA JAEGER, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
449 WARGRAVE ROAD  
NEWTON LE WILLOWS  
MERSEYSIDE  
WA12 8RS**

Telephone (01925) 224899 Fax (01925) 291368

**DISABILITY EQUALITY STATEMENT**

## **DISABILITY EQUALITY STATEMENT**

Wargrave House School is a Non-Maintained Special School for children and young people with an autistic spectrum disorder. The school offers day and residential placements and we also provide residential respite services.

In line with our commitment and responsibilities towards equality, Wargrave House School assesses the impact of, and gathers information on, the effect of policies and practices on disability equality and reports annually on this.

Every child with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder is unique. They may have a wide range of abilities, but they all will have difficulties with social communication and social interaction and in flexible thinking and imagination (for example they may find creative play difficult, or they may have very rigid or repetitive behaviour patterns), and they will each experience these difficulties in different ways.

The school and residential services promote welcoming environments for all. We hope that all the children and young people attending the school and using the residential services feel valued and confident in expressing their ideas and opinions.

The school has a long history of promoting students' active involvement in their own learning and in the way their school is run. Children with severe impairments, including no speech, are helped to understand cause and effect. The approaches and interventions used by the School ensure all pupils can effect choices and influence what happens.

We have built on this to enable pupils to take part in all aspects of their school life:

- Involvement in the selection of their own targets and self-assessment of their own learning goals (Individual Education Plans, IEPs),
- Membership of the School Council,.
- Social inclusion activities (community-based sessions and work experience

Pupils contribute to and attend their own Annual Reviews. This involvement and choice-making is supported through structure and use of communication aids (TEACCH, PECS, assistive technology).

We are building on our culture of involvement to involve the pupils in taking forward our Disability Equality Scheme.

## **Legislative Background: The Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is the main piece of disability equality legislation in Britain. It gives disabled people rights in accessing:

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Education, and
- Public transport vehicles

The DDA gave disabled people individual rights in these areas. If a disabled person felt that they were being discriminated against they could seek recourse.

### The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The individual rights based approach of the original DDA was found to not be enough to tackle the persistent discrimination experienced by disabled people. Therefore the 2005 Act introduced a new positive duty on schools and other public authorities to promote disability equality.

This Disability Equality Scheme (DES) has been developed to demonstrate how we are going to meet the six strands of the General Duty to promote disability equality:

1. Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
2. Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
3. Eliminating harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
4. Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
5. Encouraging participation by disabled people in public life; and
6. Taking steps to take account of disabled person's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.

Access to the curriculum

Access to the physical environment of schools

Improving communication and the delivery of school communication

We have carried out extensive work in line with our accessibility strategy, for example:

- Using accessible teaching approaches and strategies; providing materials in alternative formats where required; ensuring access to school trips and exams.
- Providing school handbooks and general school information in the preferred format of the pupil.

Therefore our accessibility strategy complements the Disability Discrimination Act duties because we are already tackling barriers to access.

### The Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability is the belief that the poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable consequence of their impairment or of medical problems, but is often the result of barriers in their environment or in people's attitudes or behaviour. Wargrave House School recognises that its duty to promote disability equality will be enhanced by using the social model approach.

Wargrave House School's ethos, vision and values are underpinned by the social model of disability. We believe that it is the disabling barriers in society that prevent disabled people from fully participating in society and having equal access to opportunities.

We work on the following categorisation of disabling barriers:

*Attitudinal barriers:* barriers that come from negative attitudes towards disabled people, stereotypical views and lack of awareness.

*Institutional barriers:* barriers that exist because of the way an organisation operates.

*Environmental barriers:* barriers that exist in the physical environment, both inside and outside.

*Communication barriers:* barriers that arise because of the way people communicate.

*Information barriers:* barriers that arise when information is inaccessible.

As an organisation we believe that society must identify and remove these barriers. We are committed to ensuring that no disabling barriers exist in the way we work as an education provider or as an employer.

### **Leadership**

The Trustees of Wargrave House Ltd have overall responsibility for this Scheme and has delegated the responsibility to the Governing Body of Wargrave House School.

Senior Managers involved in the Disability Equality Scheme are:

- Director of Services
- Head of Education
- Head of Residential Services
- Head of Speech and Language Therapy

## Involvement of Disabled People in the Scheme

In line with our core values of inclusion, partnership and empowerment, Wargrave House School is committed to including the views and opinions of disabled people in all aspects of our DES.

We recognize that we will not be able to identify and prioritise what we do to promote disability equality unless we consider the views of disabled people affected by the Scheme.

We plan for the involvement to be meaningful and outcome orientated. We will involve disabled people to:

- Identify the barriers faced by disabled people
- Set priorities for action plans
- Assess the impact of existing and proposed policies
- Monitor the success of initiatives undertaken
- Review and revise the Scheme.

Key disabled stakeholders are:

### Pupils

We already have a well established School Council, made up of pupils elected by their peers. The School Council members will play a key role in the involvement process. They will receive training on the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Equality Duty and the barriers that we want to tackle (attitudinal, institutional, environmental, information and communication barriers). They will also receive skills training such as being a representative. They will have the opportunity to create a series of questions about barriers to learning and participation in school life and use these skills to sample the views of the other pupils. The information that they will gather will be used to develop the Action Plan and review and evaluate the Disability Equality Scheme.

We will feed back to the people we have involved so that they know what effect their involvement has had.

### Disabled Staff

We will also involve our disabled staff, in particular in identifying any barriers in employment opportunities and practices within the school.

## **Stakeholder Involvement Group**

In addition to the disabled stakeholders, we will also involve parents of existing pupils through their Governing Body representatives in order to fully inform our work towards the outcomes of our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

The Stakeholder Involvement Group therefore consists of:

- Senior Managers
- School Council
- Disabled staff representatives
- Parent representatives

### **Information Gathering**

We recognise that in order to evaluate the impact that our practices, policies and procedures have on the six strands of the General Duty, we must gather and analyse information about our performance as an employer and as an education provider.

We will build on the existing arrangements we have for gathering information about our performance, including:

Equal opportunities monitoring in employment

Using the Quality Indicators contained in HMI OFSTED and Standards of Care to monitor via the School Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF), on a three yearly cycle, our performance in the curriculum, attainment, learning & teaching, support for pupils, ethos, resources and management, leadership and quality assurance

### **Impact Assessment**

The Stakeholder Involvement Group is in the process of developing an impact assessment tool which will allow us to identify any barriers which disabled people may face in education and employment. We are basing this tool on the social model of disability.

The impact assessment process will enable us to identify the practices, policies and procedures that impact on our duty to promote disability equality.

Using the tool, the Stakeholder Involvement Group will:

- consider the potential/actual positive impact of the policy on disabled people
- consider the potential/actual negative impact of the policy on disabled people
- consider whether an opportunity has been missed to promote disability equality
- make recommendations to the senior management team of the school to make improvements.

The senior management team, with stakeholders will:

- create an action plan and timescale for recommendations to be implemented and evaluated
- incorporate relevant recommendations into the school's Learning Improvement Plans

This initial plan will reflect areas we are currently aware of but will be informed by the involvement of the disabled stakeholder group, and will be extended to include this.

Given that there is a significant “back catalogue” of existing policies and procedures which have to be assessed, we will set out a timetable for assessing the impact of our principle activities over the three-year period covered by the Scheme.

We will prioritise the policies and procedures with the help of our disabled stakeholders.

Wargrave House School will provide information to all staff and parents about the DDA definition of disability. This will include an explanation that the information will be used to ensure the school is making reasonable adjustments so that individual needs are met, and that information provided will be kept confidential.

Information will be collected as follows:

- Home visits will include “letter”/ information about information gathering for disabilities
- The Information gathering process will be reviewed annually with information available to parents throughout the school year
- Staff induction procedures.

A database of disabled pupils, parents / carers and staff will be set up, which will be used for the following purposes:

- To keep a record of reasonable adjustments made to meet individual needs of pupils, parents / carers and staff
- To pass on information about necessary adjustments to the relevant people (e.g. to those staff involved with the child and to receiver schools upon transfer.)

Home visits or visits to the School prior to admission will be used to gather information about individual needs of pupils, parents and carers. Prospective staff will be asked both at the time of application and after having been appointed if they consider themselves to be a disabled person under the terms of the DDA. The school’s positive attitude to disabled people will be made explicit, in order to encourage people to have the confidence to identify themselves as disabled.

Wargrave House School will ensure information gathered from parents and/or pupils is kept confidential, in line with the Data Protection Act. We will negotiate with parent, carer or pupil about who the information is to be shared with.

## **The Action Plan**

The action plan sets out the steps that we will take to meet the General Duty. In other words, what we are going to do to promote disability equality and achieve the aims of this Scheme.

We have approached our action plan as an assessment of our current performance and an analysis of what we are going to do to improve.

The Action Plan demonstrates how Wargrave House School are going to meet the six strands of the General Duty. We have structured the Action Plan around the five disabling barriers identified by the social model of disability in order to ensure that we tackle all areas.

## **Impact assessment**

Wargrave House School will consult disabled people, or use information already gathered as the result of consulting disabled people, as part of the regular review process for all existing policies. Any new school policy that is developed will also take into account the views of disabled people.

## **Implementation**

The actions identified in the action plan have been incorporated into the School Development Plan for (2008-2009).

## **Publication**

The full version of Wargrave House School's Disability Equality Scheme will be available on the school website. Hard copies and other formats are available on request from the school.

## **Reporting**

Wargrave House School will report annually on progress being made on implementing the Disability Equality Action Plan. This report will be published on the school website and signposted in the school prospectus.

## **Review and revision**

Wargrave House School's Disability Equality Scheme will be reviewed in DECEMBER each year.

The review will be carried out by the Disability Equality Scheme working group, which will meet to look at progress towards the outcomes identified in the Action Plan. This working group will be convened by the Governing Body and will include representation from disabled people.

(Signed)\_\_\_\_\_ Dated\_\_\_\_\_

(Chair of Governing Body)

To obtain a copy of this document in an alternative format such as large print, please contact:

Senior Administrator;  
Wargrave House School

Telephone: 01925 224899; Fax: 01925 291368

Email: [suegledhill@wargravehouse.com](mailto:suegledhill@wargravehouse.com)

This policy should be read in conjunction with our EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY AND GUIDELINES.