



**BEVERLEY SCHOOL
FOR
STUDENTS WITH AUTISM**

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME POLICY

**Updated:November 2021
Approved by Governors:November 2021
To be reviewed:November 2023**

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This Scheme is evidence of Beverley School's commitment to equality of opportunity, and describes practical steps which translate this commitment into successful experiences for people with disabilities.

In this respect:

- We ensure that everyone in school is treated fairly and with respect.
- We recognise that people have different needs and that treating people equally does not always involve treating everyone in exactly the same way.
- We ensure that school is a safe place for everyone.
- We consult with people from different groups and involve them in our decision making.
- We recognise that extra support is needed for some students to help them achieve their full potential and be successful.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

We are aware of the current legislative framework.

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspection Act 2006 to promote Community Cohesion.

The School is bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duty.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives.

We aim to make sure that no-one experiences less favourable treatment or discrimination because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Colour or national origin
- Gender
- Gender identity or reassignment
- Their marital or civil partnership status
- Being pregnant or having recently had a baby
- Religious beliefs
- Sexual identity and orientation

The Act does not cover socio-economic circumstances as a protected characteristic. However, in our school, socio-economic circumstances are taken into consideration. We acknowledge that students may have a range of additional characteristics which intersect and must be taken into account when measuring the impact of the Pupil Premium Grant.

Beverley School recognises that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Human Rights Act 1998.

We welcome the general principles of UNCRC and have regard, in particular, for the needs of children and young people who are disadvantaged and vulnerable and their parents and carers.

VISION AND VALUES

Our overall aim is to be an outstanding school and service for children with autism. This means that we aim to:

- provide a relevant, broad and balanced education for every individual child
- create a culture of achievement by stimulating a desire to learn, raising aspirations, opening up a wide range of opportunities and working towards external accreditation for all our students
- promote health, wellbeing, happiness, enjoyment and independence in a stimulating yet safe, secure and caring environment
- value and respect individuals, recognising their strengths, encouraging them to develop their interests and abilities, and helping them show positive attitudes towards others
- be pro-active in developing, using and promoting consistent autism spectrum condition (ASC) approaches, with a focus on social interaction and communication, and the reduction of anxiety and unnecessary stress
- invest in the long term quality of life of our children, by preparing them for an independent and purposeful role in society as adults, through explicit teaching of life skills and socially acceptable behaviour, and by fostering confidence, self-esteem and a realistic understanding of themselves as people affected by autism
- prepare our children for the challenges and opportunities of a complex and technologically advanced society through creative, innovative and motivating approaches to teaching and learning

We believe that we can achieve these aims because Beverley School is an inclusive, accessible, friendly, and approachable organisation where teamwork flourishes. We are proud of our successes, whilst remaining committed to self-evaluation and professional growth. We are amenable to changing how we do things where this will lead to further improvement. We believe in co-operation and partnership with all those, both in the local community and more widely, who share our commitment to improving the lives of anyone affected by autism.

Beverley School aims to behave in a fair, open and non-discriminatory way in all our dealings with students, staff, volunteers and members of the public. To achieve this we will meet the following criteria:

- the ethos of the school and all activities organised by the school will provide a friendly, supportive and secure atmosphere for all participants
- the physical environment of the school and the venues chosen for school activities will, wherever possible, enable access by all those wishing to take part
- all communications from the school will be positive and accessible and will avoid potentially offensive or discriminatory language
- the organisation, administration and employment practices of the school, including the selection and deployment of staff and volunteers, will ensure equality of opportunity and access

The school will require all organisations operating with its support to ensure that these principles of equality of opportunity and access are followed in all activities.

The Governors welcome initiatives taken by Middlesbrough Council to promote equality of opportunity and confirm that the school will support all relevant local and national policies and procedures.

ACCESSIBILITY

Beverley School will ensure that all staff and governors are aware of the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and, through training and development opportunities, embed the good practice across all aspects of school life. As an autism-specific special school, routines and resources are in place throughout the organisation to support the specific needs of students, for example through visual timetables, clear rules and reward systems, symbol supported communication, rotas and work baskets (reflecting all relevant aspects of the TEACCH and PECS approaches).

We try to ensure that every child has the best opportunity to achieve. Working with the local authority, we ensure that the support for all students consistently meets needs and that, where necessary, there is extra support with regard to additional disabilities. We make 'reasonable adjustments' to our practices and policies to meet the requirements of the DDA.

Beverley School moved into a new building in April 2011. The building was designed to maximise accessibility, including a lift to the second floor. The school also recently bought a minibus which has wheelchair access and has included a ramp and bench working area within the newly erected outdoor classroom. EVAC chairs are strategically placed on the second floor for disabled users.

We use a range of formats to meet differing needs for information. Visual signs and photographs are used in appropriate places for all students and visitors, and particularly for those who need visual cues to help them. We are aware that many students with autism have relative strengths in handling visual information rather than spoken language. We, therefore, use graphic and symbolic systems, including ICT displays, as well as clear written language. Although additional impairments, requiring for example enlarged print or Braille, are rarely found among our pupil population, we are aware of services to produce alternative formats if necessary.

ICT is used across the curriculum and we actively seek opportunities to develop accessibility including interactive whiteboards, switches, adapted keyboards, touch screens, android and iPads to enable wider access for all.

We rigorously monitor and evaluate the progress of individuals and our progress as a school to ensure that we are helping all children enjoy and achieve. We welcome, and actively seek feedback from parents / carers through both formal and informal channels, including discussion in Annual Reviews and responses to School Self-Evaluation questionnaires. There is easy access to details of the complaints procedures, and should any complaints be received from parents, these will be reported to the Governing Body and the responses and outcomes monitored and evaluated.

SCHOOL OUTCOMES

Students at Beverley School are measured academically against national targets. Due to their very specific needs, the school uses SOLAR to track student progress and EHCP outcomes.

PARTICIPATION

Students take part in out-of-school visits weekly. The school presently has 3 minibuses which are used to access swimming, horse riding, shopping expeditions and a huge variety of community visits. There are also several Residential visits each year – primary, secondary and sixth form. Parents' evenings are held termly.

STAFF TRAINING

Beverley School has a commitment to train staff in autism specific CPD including Attention Autism, TEACCH, PECS, Social Stories, as well as positive behaviour management through Team Teach. All new staff follow an induction programme. Some staff have more specific training, e.g. First Aid.

CURRICULUM ADJUSTMENTS

Students are taught in classes which are grouped with stage of development rather than age in mind. This ensures that the curriculum can be tailored to individual need more readily.

The school takes part / is a member in the following:

- Autism Accreditation
- SSAT (The Schools Network)
- Schools North East
- Federation of Leaders in Special Education (FLSE)
- The British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD)

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS (examples)

In this respect we have ensured that our student who uses a wheelchair has access to the lift with his own fob to use it independently. This pupil is also able to access the school minibus. Younger children are provided with booster seats to ensure safe travel on the minibus.

Additional furniture is available in the science room for wheelchair user access.

The outdoor classroom in the woodland area was built with a ramp and the bench working area was designed to accommodate a wheelchair user.

The Nursery classroom was built with a ramp to ensure access for all users

A hygiene room is available on both floors to ensure dignified changing – at present, no hoists are required.

We have enabled students to access relevant external accreditation via Examination Access Assessment.

MECHANISMS FOR INVOLVEMENT

Our approach to school self-evaluation and school improvement centres on the engagement of all members of the school community. A range of networks and groups provides opportunities for students, parents / carers, and everyone else with an interest in the school to contribute their views and expertise.

The following mechanisms will ensure the views of students, parents / carers, staff and the community:

- School Council
- Individual interviews with students involved in incidents of a discriminatory nature
- Individual interviews with students requiring reasonable adjustments
- Parents / carers invited to coffee mornings with focus on information (Family Liaison Officer co-ordinates and meets with parents), e.g. E-safety
- Home School Agreements
- Interpreters are provided where relevant
- Feedback through Governing Body meetings
- Family Liaison Officer liaises closely with parents
- Exit interviews with staff are available on request
- Regular staff meetings with specific agenda items
- Individual discussions with staff as a part of appraisal
- HR advice available at absence from work interviews

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher:

- Demonstrates responsibilities under the Equality Act.
- Manages any day-to-day issues arising from the policy whether for students or for the school as an employer.
- Ensures staff have access to training which helps to implement the Scheme.
- Liaises with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available.
- Monitors the Scheme and reports to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the policy.
- Ensures that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is kept up-to-date with any developments affecting the policy objectives and connected action plan arising from the Scheme.
- Provides appropriate support and monitoring for all students and specific and targeted students to whom the scheme has direct relevance.
- Ensures CPD is inclusive of all staff and includes equality matters.
- Ensures recruitment, selection and promotion of all staff (teaching, support and administrative), reflects fair and safer recruitment procedures.
- Ensures that the voice of all stakeholders including parent / carer voice, pupil voice and staff voice is taken into account when making decisions.

The Governing Body:

- Ensures that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation.
- Ensures all governors receive up-to-date training in all the equalities duties.
- Establishes that the action plans arising from the Scheme are part of the School Development Plan.
- Supports the Headteacher in implementing any objectives necessary.
- Informs and consults with parents about the Scheme.
- Evaluates and review the objectives.
- Assesses the potential impact of decisions made upon equalities.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- Responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Scheme.

- Provides a lead in the collection and dissemination of information relating to the Scheme.
- Identifies good quality resources and CPD opportunities to support implementation of the Scheme.
- Provides advice / support in dealing with any incidents / issues.
- Assists in implementing reviews of this Scheme as detailed in the School Development Plan.
- Evaluates and review the objectives.
- Ensures coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues.
- Ensures the curriculum promotes students' SMSC (spiritual, moral, social, cultural).
- Ensure the peer support programme within the school promotes understanding and supports students who are experiencing discrimination.

Specific Responsibilities:

Pippa Irwin and Jane May are responsible for maintaining and sharing with all staff, the specific needs of vulnerable students and how their needs will be met (e.g. Pupil Premium).

School Business Manager – responsible for ensuring the specific needs of staff members are addressed.

SLT – responsible for monitoring the response to reported incidents of a discriminatory nature.

Parents / Carers:

- Have access to the Scheme.
- Are encouraged to support the Scheme.
- Have the opportunity to attend any relevant meetings / awareness raising sessions related to the Scheme.
- Have the right to be informed of any incident related to this Scheme which could directly affect their child.
- Are informed of objectives.

School Staff:

- Accept that this is a whole school issue and support the Single Equality Scheme.
- Have read and understand the Scheme and how it relates to them.
- Make known any queries or training requirements.
- Know how to deal with incidents of concern and how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping.
- Know procedures for reporting prejudice driven behaviour, including incidents of racism, harassment or other forms of discrimination.
- Do not discriminate on racial, disability or other grounds.
- Keep themselves up-to-date with relevant legislation and attend training and information events organised by the school or local authority.
- Ensure that students from all groups are included in all activities and have full access to the curriculum.
- Promote equality and diversity through teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, the learning environment and through relations with students, staff, parents / carers and the wider community.

Students:

- Are made aware of any relevant part of the Scheme, appropriate to age and ability.
- Are expected to act in accordance with any relevant part of the Scheme.
- Experience a curriculum and environment which is respectful of diversity and difference and prepares them well for life in a diverse society.
- Understand the importance of reporting discriminatory bullying and racially motivated incidents.
- Understand their role in supporting the implementation of objectives (where relevant).

Visitors:

- Visitors and contractors are responsible for complying with the school's Equality Scheme – non-compliance will be dealt with by the Headteacher.

The effectiveness of our Scheme is evaluated and reflected in the school's Self-Evaluation Form.