

# Accessibility - Disability Equality Policy

## Background

Broadlands Hall aims to identify and remove barriers to disabled students in every area of School life and will ensure that students feel welcome irrespective of race, colour, creed or impairment.

Whilst Broadlands Hall does not currently have any students with a physical disability on its Register, planning, both short, medium and long-term is in place to cover any areas where it is foreseen there may be a shortfall in requirements.

The definition of 'disability' within this document includes:

- Physical impairment (including sensory impairments)
- Mental impairment (including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, ADHD) but only where these are likely to affect the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Those with cancer, multiple sclerosis or severe disfigurement.

Broadlands Hall is ready and able to adapt and will ensure that any child who becomes a student at the School is supported not only by an enthusiastic and supportive staff, but also with as many aids as are deemed necessary to make the life of both students and staff easier in an educational setting.

## Recruitment, Development and Retention of Disabled Employees

Broadlands Hall recognises that disabled staff may have much to contribute to the School and will not discriminate towards applicants in any way. However, the safety of the individual must always be of paramount importance as the nature of the students at Broadlands Hall means that all employees must be able to restrain a child if necessary. As much teaching takes place on a 1-to-1 basis, all staff need to be relatively mobile for their own safety as there will not always be time to call for additional help.

Broadlands Hall will develop a policy of interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum requirement for a job.

Upon recruitment, employees are required to complete a confidential Medical Questionnaire. This is seen only by qualified medical staff who will make a decision as to whether or not an applicant is able to fulfil the physical requirements of the position. Applicants receive a letter explaining that information in the Medical Questionnaire will be treated confidentially and will be signed and sealed by the Medical Officer prior to being kept on file in a secure container. If it is determined that the applicant will require additional help to enable them to carry out their role effectively, the Medical Officer will advise the Headteacher whose responsibility it will be to ensure that additional help / equipment / training is provided. All Educational staff receive on-going training in areas such as Non-Physical Intervention, First-Aid in the workplace, Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Food Hygiene and Child Protection.

All staff will have an annual appraisal. They are also encouraged to speak to the Headteacher at any time should they feel that adjustments could be made to their working conditions which will benefit them.

Upon leaving Broadlands Hall, all staff will have an 'Exit Interview' at which time the Headteacher will ascertain whether there have been any adverse conditions which have contributed to the staff member terminating their employment with the School.

## Impact Assessment

Broadlands Hall will review its policies on a regular basis and immediately upon registration of a student, parents / carers or others associated with the student, with any type of disability. It is hoped that, by performing this exercise, all policies for the School will remain current and effective.

## Main Priorities

*Promoting Equality of Opportunity.* The School will examine all information given to students to ensure that it encompasses anything helpful gathered from current disabled students at the School. The School will also speak to parents / carers, teachers and Social Workers to ascertain whether there is anything that can be done to make their involvement with the School easier.

*Eliminating Discrimination.* Staff will keep a close watch on the impact of all policies and will work to raise expectations of all disabled students.

*Eliminating Harassment.* The staff will work towards raising awareness amongst students, parents and carers of disability-related harassment. This will be done both in written policies and in regular PHSE lessons. Any harassment will be immediately addressed.

*Promoting Positive Attitudes.* Staff will treat all students with respect, regardless of disability. The School also expects behaviour of the highest standard of all its students towards one-another ('treat others as you wish to be treated yourself').

The School will use positive disabled role models to highlight achievements. This has already been done in the case of an epileptic child meeting and working with an epileptic member of staff who has been able to pass on their own experiences in this area in a positive and encouraging manner.

*Encouraging Participation in Public Life.* All students at Broadlands Hall are encouraged to take part in public life when they are at a stage in their development where this is appropriate to both themselves and others. All students are taken out on an individual basis for social outings and are encouraged to enter into conversations with the public and to adhere to formal conventions (opening doors, please and thank you at restaurants etc).

*Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.*

Because of the widely varying nature of emotional disability of students at Broadlands Hall, all have individual plans and this sometimes entails a student having additional assistance / coaching / facilities.

## Registration of Disabled Students

Prior to accepting a student into Broadlands Hall, a meeting will be held with the parents / carers / social workers and placing LEA to ascertain whether or not Broadlands Hall is the right school for that child. It is important in such a small school that the balance of students is right and that 'needs' do not 'clash'.

During this meeting, all special requirements will be carefully noted and no child will be accepted until the School can be sure that every element is in place to guarantee an easy and successful transition of education.

## Current Access

Students with impaired mobility are able to access the new Education Centre comprising 12 classrooms, library, games room, sensory room and art suite. All corridors are wide enough to allow wheelchair access and entrance / exit points have ramped access. In addition, all the sports facilities are within easy reach of the Education Centre and are on one level. Signage throughout the School is visual (pictures and words) and the fire alarm auditory but staff are tasked with physically clearing the building of personnel. All areas of the School are well lit with low level emergency lighting in place. As the entire Education Centre is on one level, there is no problem with access to the grounds in the event of fire.

## Toilet Facilities

Toilets, including a disabled facility, are available in the building.

## Transport and access around the School grounds

The School has access to a professionally converted Chrysler Voyager Wheelchair Carrier which can be used for travel outside the School. There are wide pathways to allow access around the outside of the School and vehicles can be parked immediately outside the Main Entrance to the School.

## Furniture and Equipment:

Broadlands Hall recognises that students of varying disabilities will require different facilities within the School. To ensure that students are able to work in the very best conditions, the Head Teacher at the School will assess the needs of a child prior to his/her arrival and will ensure that chairs, tables and desks of a suitable nature are purchased. Advice will be sought from parents / carers and other outside agencies. All students have access to computers and adapted keyboards will be available to any students who may require them. We also provide a sensory room.

## The Curriculum

Because of the specialist nature of the School, the curriculum is already presented to students in a wide variety of formats and these can be adapted for disabled students. ICT is widely used to produce written information in differing formats and signs can be printed in a large font. Staff are all familiar with this technology. Interactive whiteboards are installed throughout the School which, in conjunction with printers, will enable all lessons to be printed out in an easy-to-read format for any disabled students who require information to be presented in a more accessible way. In addition, computer programmes will be used to provide alternative methods of education for those unable to access the written word. A successful and recognized teaching programme of 'Sound Foundations' will be used for any child with reading difficulties.

## Policies

Upon acceptance of a student at the School with any type of disability, all School Policies will be re-visited to ensure that they take into consideration the particular requirements of the new student.

## Staff

Staff at Broadlands Hall work with students who have special educational needs as well as emotional and behavioural difficulties. Therefore, they are already trained in many aspects of caring for students with

requirements that may be considered outside of 'the norm'. Prior to a disabled child being accepted at the School, the Disability Officer will ensure that staff either have, or will receive, the necessary training required to work with that child. In some instances, this may involve recruiting additional staff with specialist qualifications (Makaton training, Brail reading, sign language etc).

### Policy-Making

When a physically disabled student is registered he/she will be asked to join a group including the Head Teacher to regularly review the facilities in the School. This group will also play an active role in decision-making for the future.

### Teachers / Parents / Carers

Whilst this document refers directly to students at the School, the same policy will apply to any new teachers, parents or carers who become involved with Broadlands Hall. Immediately the School is aware of any teacher, parent or carer joining the School who may require special assistance, they will be invited to meet with the School Disability Officer who will ensure that any additional resources / facilities are put in place as soon as is practically possible.

### Reporting

The Headteacher will report on its Disability Equality Scheme annually and will investigate progress that has been made in short, medium and long-term plans. In addition, the effect of work completed will be recorded and future plans will be discussed. Both this document and other policies will be re-visited annually to ensure that they are still current and the entire Scheme will be reviewed and revised as necessary every three years.

