

# Mapledown School



Working and Learning Together

## Equality Information Objectives and Accessibility Policy

<b>Name of School</b>	Mapledown School
<b>This policy was agreed by Governors and adopted on</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021
<b>The policy is to be reviewed on</b>	November 2024

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### 1. Introduction

This Policy is a statement of the principles and practices at Mapledown school to ensure all people with disabilities; pupils, staff and visitors, have full access to the physical environment, to the learning opportunities and the cultural and social life of the school. Underpinning this Policy is the philosophy that all people, regardless of their abilities and disabilities, are to be treated fairly, with respect, and have an entitlement to equality of opportunity. By adjusting the environment some disabilities are minimised and the environment becomes accessible to all. This policy should be read alongside the Equality Act 2010.

At Mapledown School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled pupils, staff and all those receiving services from the school. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. The achievement of disabled students will be monitored and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. At Mapledown, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

## 2. Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination. The following characteristics are protected characteristics— age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation, it defines a disabled person as someone who has ‘a physical or mental impairment’ which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

Discrimination can take place in two ways:

- Treating a person ‘less favourably’ than others for a reason relating directly to their disability.
- Failing to make ‘reasonable’ adjustment to ensure they are not placed at a ‘substantial disadvantage’ for a reason relating to their disability

## 3. Aims

This policy aims to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 has three aims under the general duty for schools/academies and settings which:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. By removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. By taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. By encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Mapledown School understands and recognises that there are eight protected characteristics/groups protected by the Act:

1. Age (as an employer of staff – but not applicable to pupils)
2. Disability
3. Sex
4. Race
5. Religion and belief
6. Pregnancy and maternity
7. Sexual orientation
8. Gender reassignment
9. Marriage and civil partnership\*(as an employer – but not applicable to pupils\*)

In compiling this equality information, we have:

· Identified evidence already in the school of equality within policies and practice and identified gaps.

· Examined how our school engages with the protected groups, identifying where practice could be improved.

· Analysed our effectiveness in terms of equality.

#### **4. Mission Statement**

At Mapledown School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled pupils, staff and all those receiving services from the school. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. At Mapledown, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. Mapledown school is committed to ensuring equality for all, regardless of their ability, age, race, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

#### **5. Principles**

- The school environment is as accessible as possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school, e.g., wheelchair access, signage, disabled parking bays, etc.
- All students at Mapledown will play a full part in the life of the school and have opportunities to represent the school both internally and in the community.
- Any bullying and harassment of disabled pupils and staff will be monitored and information acted on.
- Disability is portrayed positively in school books, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies.
- Diversity is portrayed positively in school books, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies.
- The school will take part in annual events such as Children in Need to raise awareness of disability.
- Information is available to parents, visitors, pupils and staff in a variety of formats to support accessibility. School communication will avoid the use of jargon and use a 'plain English' approach.
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled.
- An annual accessibility audit is undertaken to ensure there is forward planning to cater for changes in the school population.
- Students of Mapledown are encouraged to be as independent as possible.
- Staff are supported to complete a maternity risk assessment to help keep them safe by adjusting their work accordingly
- Recruitment follows Barnet guidance on fair advertising and selection.

#### **6. Access to the curriculum**

The curriculum at Mapledown School is differentiated to meet the wide range of abilities of its students. It encourages the best at all times. The timetable is organised to reflect the different needs of the pupils and is the overall responsibility of the Leadership Team. The curriculum should reflect and include a range of different life experiences and actively challenge negative stereotypes of these in content and resources. It is the responsibility of all staff for its implementation.

All staff need;

- To ensure all pupils are communicated with in an appropriate format using AAC as appropriate.
- To ensure pupils with a sensory impairment, e.g., VI, HI, MSI, have alternative access to the curriculum, e.g., tactile approaches.
- To ensure all parts of the building are wheelchair accessible.
- To ensure there is adjustable level access where possible for sinks, computer tables, book shelves etc.
- To ensure all pupils play outside in the playground at lunchtime having full access to the social opportunities of Mapledown school
- To ensure all pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum and are not excluded from activities due to their physical/ sensory disabilities.
- To explore the use of technology to enable pupil independence and develop communication, e.g., big mack devices and eye gaze technology.

The achievements of pupils at Mapledown School are recognised in different ways; displays, certificates, Achievement Profiles, the Mapledown Cup. It is the responsibility of staff to see that all pupils' achievements are valued equally.

## **7. Monitoring**

To meet the Disability Equality Duty, it is essential that aspects of school life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and young people with disabilities. The following should be monitored:

- Achievement of pupils by disability
- Disabled staff (including numbers, type of disability and satisfaction rates in staff surveys etc.)
- Access issues are invited from staff on an on-going basis.

To meet the Gender Equality Duty, we take active steps to comply with both

- Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act.
- Take active steps to promote equality of opportunity between genders
- We monitor and review pupil progress in relation to gender and make necessary adjustments if there is any discrepancy
- Identify Gender Equality Scheme goals
- Follow Local Authority guidance on Equal Pay

To meet the Race Equality Duty, we undertake

- To at all times be vigilant for aspects of our work and play, which may hurt or disadvantage others.
- All acts of bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.
- Racism in all its forms is not acceptable and will be challenged.
- Any form of racial bullying is reported termly to the local authority

	What evidence do we hold that we eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	How do we advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who are not?	How do we foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?
Race	Equality policy Termly reports on racial incidents to GB Low number of reported racial incidents	Celebration of differences Curriculum Assemblies School policies	Celebration of differences Curriculum Assemblies Good links with parents School policies promote equality Job descriptions for staff School ethos School displays promote diversity
Disability	School policies Inclusive practices Feedback from parents Termly reports to GB Assessment data Purchase of additional resources	School policies Raising attainment Tracking progress	Good links with parents Assemblies Annual review meetings School ethos
Gender	Admission process Recruitment process Gender equality scheme	School policies	Good links with parents Assemblies School ethos
Gender reassignment	Inclusive practices Admission process Recruitment process	Celebration of differences School policies	Good links with parents Parent support advisor
Pregnancy and maternity	Policy for expectant mothers Reasonable adjustments in place Regular meetings Risk assessment	Continue good practice Paternity leave	Following policies Continue to make reasonable adjustments to ensure individuals are supported at work School Ethos
Age	Employment/recruitment process	Recruitment process	Recruitment process School ethos
Religion and belief	Admission procedures Employment document	Celebration of differences Curriculum Assemblies	Good links with parents School ethos School displays
Sexual orientation	School policies Inclusive practices Admission process Equality policy	Celebration of differences School policies Review of practices	Admission process School ethos

## 8. Summary of our Equality Analysis

In relation to the protected characteristics relevant to us as a **public sector employer** our equality analysis showed that we have particular strengths in:

**Disability:** We support members of staff who have a disability by ensuring they are safe and supported through thorough risk assessments.

**Pregnancy:** We support members of staff who are pregnant by ensuring risks are minimised through detailed risk assessment, adjusting their work accordingly and allowing time off for any necessary prenatal appointments.

**Maternity:** We offer members of staff who are on maternity leave Keep in Touch days.

**Disability:** We review the access arrangements for our current disabled toilets.

**Sex:** We look to employ more male members of staff to balance the gender ratio

In relation to the protected characteristics relevant to us as a school our equality analysis showed that we have particular strengths in:

**Race:** We buy in a translator if needed for meetings.

**Disability:** We actively find ways to make our school more accessible for individuals who have a disability.

Areas we want to develop further:

**Religion or belief:** Greater emphasis on celebrating festivals from a wider range of religions.

**Disability:** Possible disability awareness days with invited guests who provide positive role models for our pupils.

**Sex:** Review Relationship and sex education policy.

### We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men, and an absence of sexual harassment

## 9. Additional Implications for Schools

### **The role of a school as a service provider:**

Schools have additional implications as a service provider to make their buildings accessible when they hire out rooms or parts of the building. We only hire out spaces which are accessible for users.

### **Contact with parents and carers:**

When providing newsletters and information for parents and carers, schools should make this information available in an accessible format so that parents or carers who may be, for example, visually impaired, can access the information. Additionally, events for parents and carers such as open evenings, meetings with teachers, are held in accessible parts of the building.

#### **Hiring transport:**

School staff are aware of Section 6 of the Act when hiring transport as it puts new duties on transport providers, including the bus and coach companies, and the taxi and private hire car trade. The requirement to provide accessible vehicles is extended to include these transport providers. Bus companies will not be able to refuse a job because, for example, it may take longer to pick up disabled students.

#### **Election of parent governors**

The election of parent governors will now be covered by the Equality Act, and governors will need to ensure that the procedures for candidates to stand for election and for parents to vote for candidates are accessible to disabled people. However, the result of the election is not covered and disabled candidates will not be able to claim that they were not elected simply because they were disabled. Once a disabled parent governor is elected, the school governing body functions in relation to that parent are covered and the school must ensure that they can participate fully in school life.

## **10. The Accessibility Plan**

The Accessibility Plan is structured to complement and support the school's Equality Objectives.

All pupils have the right of equal access to the curriculum, therapies and extra-curricular activities. The school aims to provide physical access to all areas of the school and welcomes and strives to facilitate access to all parents/carers.

Mapledown School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. They are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school.

Mapledown School has adopted this accessibility plan in line with the school's special educational needs policy with the aim to ensure that their school is socially and academically inclusive, that all pupils have access to a full curriculum, and that all pupils are appropriately challenged. This plan is created in response to the recommendations made in our school's last access audit which took place in November 2020. The School's special educational needs policy outlines the provision that the school has in place to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and the school's publication of equality information objectives contained in this document explains how we ensure equal opportunities for all our students. Increased access to the curriculum, physical access to the school, and access to information are particular to students with SEND, and this accessibility plan provides an outline of how the school will manage this part of the SEND provision.

Under the remit of the Equality Act 2010, provision should be made for all pupils with disabilities and ensure that they are not discriminated against. The need for specialist support and educational

provision should be clearly identified and used effectively, to the full benefit of the pupil's development.

Pupils with SEND will be given access to the curriculum supported by the school's specialist SEND provision and in line with the wishes of their parents and the needs of the individual.

The school curriculum is regularly reviewed by the Head Teacher to ensure that it is accessible to pupils of all levels and abilities and supports the learning and progress of all pupils as individuals. This includes learning outside the classroom.

It is the aim of the School to ensure that all resources and SEND provisions are being used effectively and efficiently within the school setting in order to support the taught curriculum and enable pupils to reach their full potential. The school does this by:

- keeping staff fully informed of the special educational needs of any pupils in their charge including sharing progress reports, medical reports and teacher feedback
- providing regular training and learning opportunities for staff in all departments on the subject of SEND and SEND teaching; school staff should be up to date with teaching methods that will aid the progress of all pupils including those with SEND
- making use of all class facilities and space
- using in-class provisions and support effectively to ensure that the curriculum is differentiated where necessary
- making sure that individual or group tuition is available where it is felt that pupils would benefit from this provision
- any decision to provide group teaching outside the classroom will involve the SENCO in providing a rationale and focus on flexible teaching. Parents will be made aware of any circumstances in which changes have been made
- setting appropriate individual targets that motivate pupils to do their best, and celebrating achievements at all levels
- listening to pupils' views and taking them into account in all aspects of school life.

## **2. Sensory and physical needs**

The school has some of the following adaptations in place to meet sensory and physical needs and those not yet present are being planned for the future:

- appropriate seating, acoustic conditioning and lighting
- adaptations to the physical environment of the school
- adaptations to school policies and procedures
- access to alternative or augmented forms of communication
- provision of tactile and kinaesthetic materials
- access to low vision aids
- access to specialist aids, equipment or furniture
- regular and frequent access to specialist support

## **3. Reasonable adjustments**

The School will also make reasonable adjustments for individual students who need extra provision than that which is already in place to make sure that all students are involved in every aspect of school life, and that all barriers to learning are removed.

At Mapledown School, all staff have the right to training and development. Maximising autonomy is a driving force in the school and it is the responsibility of all staff to promote this.

#### **The main priorities in the school's Accessibility plan**

##### **Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum**

Training for teachers and support staff and differentiating the curriculum  
All out of School activities are planned and risk assessed to ensure participation for all  
Training for Awareness  
Raising of Disability issues  
Information to know your students' needs

##### **Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services:**

The key objective is to ensure that school premises are adapted so that disabled pupils are not prevented from attending the school of their choice because the premises are inaccessible and/or cannot meet the needs of the pupils.

Making sure clear procedures are implemented to ensure that disabled pupils who are starting school have their needs assessed and that necessary adaptations at the school of their choice are carried out in time for the start of term.

##### **Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled:**

Availability of written material in alternative formats as required  
Raise the awareness of adults working at or for the School on good communications  
If required arrange for visual impaired students to be able to access documentation  
Review all policies to ensure that they do not discriminate the needs of staff, students or visitors

## **11. Promoting Community Cohesion**

As the only secondary special school for pupils with Severe, Complex and Profound Learning Difficulties, Mapledown School serves the whole of Barnet. Our students and staff reflect the rich social – economic and cultural mix found across the Borough. We have always sought to value and serve all members of the school's community and have in place an extensive range of policies and practices that ensure that we promote fairness and equality, remove barriers, combat discriminatory practices and celebrate our diversity as strength.

Mapledown School works to promote Community Cohesion in the following contexts:

The school community – we ensure that all members of our school community feel secure and valued with all staff actively practising our school Aims and providing a respectful working environment. Students learn to echo these values by working on their Key Personal Learning Targets and accessing our curriculum.

The local community – Barnet is a typical London Borough with an intensely rich and diverse local community. We will ensure that all members of our school community have the opportunity to share and celebrate their identities.

The UK community – The school will work to the notion that that the UK is a diverse yet strong community in which each person and group can expect to be treated fairly. Our differences are our strengths and we can all learn from each other.

The global community – We will continue to develop our existing international links and work to establish more. In this way we can broaden students' horizons and forge practical examples of cooperation which promote mutual understanding.

See below for more detailed explanation and examples.

The DfE guidance suggests that we can look at community cohesion under three distinct but related headings.

- Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Mapledown has a range of policies and practices which promote individual rights and responsibilities and a sense of duty and respect towards each other and the world at large. The school has:

- ❖ A broad and balanced curriculum
- ❖ A Social Skills Curriculum and a proactive approach to building positive behaviours
- ❖ Achieved the National Healthy Schools Standard
- ❖ An elected pupil School Council
- ❖ Policies for Equal Opportunities/Race Equality/Gender Equality /SEN/EAL/and a Disability Equalities Scheme
- ❖ A developing range of links and contacts with overseas schools.
- ❖ Regular visits to places of worship representative of the many faiths found in the school
- ❖ Daily Acts of Collective Worship and weekly whole school Assembly where major festivals are shared and celebrated
- ❖ Reporting arrangements to the LA should the anyone at school experience racist or homophobic abuse/bullying

- Equity & Excellence

- ❖ A whole school approach to inclusive practice including policies on Access and Inclusion/Anti-Bullying and promoting Positive Behaviour
- ❖ All students have Key Personal Learning Targets which are subject to Annual Review and termly monitoring
- ❖ A clear and fair Admissions Policy which is publicly available
- ❖ A well-resourced school with highly trained and committed staff who work within an ethos that seek to remove barriers to learning and promote learning at all times
- ❖ The school practises 'Fair & Safe Recruitment' and follows national Safeguarding regulations.

- Engagement & Extended Services

- ❖ The school offers Work Experience placements to all school in Barnet
- ❖ The school has established links with large employers based locally who come into school to support our Work-Related Learning – e.g., John Lewis, Tesco, The Holiday Inn
- ❖ The school offers access to free translation services for any family in need
- ❖ Advice Sessions – families have the offer of termly advice surgeries run by our own Family Support Worker each Thursday morning
- ❖ The school conducts annual surveys of satisfaction so that families and staff can input into the annual School Development Plan

Our annual staff and parents' surveys provide information which we may use as evidence of ensuring compliance and maintaining our high standards.

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This policy will be reviewed every three years.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the

- Staff code of conduct
- Staff handbook
- RSE policy
- Pay policy
- Recruitment policy
- SEND report