



### **Public Sector Equality Duty : Context**

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplified the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with. It also strengthened the law in important ways, to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The public sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Act) came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs.

The Equality Duty is supported by specific duties, set out in regulations which came into force on 10 September 2011. The specific duties require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty; and to set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives.

### **The specific duties require public bodies to:**

- publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually; and
- set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

All information must be published in a way which makes it easy for people to access it.

Public bodies subject to the specific duties must publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty. This means that the information they publish must show that they had due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We describe these as the three aims of the Equality Duty.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Duty are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Public bodies must publish information to show that they consciously thought about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

([www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/))

The definition of disability under the law is a wide one:

**A disabled person is someone who has a**

*Physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.*

*The definition includes people with a Hearing or Visual Impairment, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, mental health issues and incontinence. People with ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Downs Syndrome and Hydrocephalus are included. Medical conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, severe Asthma, Diabetes, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, Sickle Cell Anaemia and HIV are deemed disabilities. Facial disfigurement, severe Dyslexia, gross obesity and diagnosed eating disorders are all included.*

*If a person has been disabled in the past (for example, cancer recoverers and people with a history of mental illness) they are still covered by the legislation for the rest of their life.*

**Saxon Hill Academy: Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty**

Equality sits at the heart of Saxon Hill and its purpose as a school for children and young people with physical and learning disabilities. The Public Sector Equality Duty however, has a wider remit to consider all aspects of equality as set out above.

We therefore have a responsibility to consider our equality duties with regard to:

- Our children and young people
- Our families and carers
- Our staff teams and governors
- Other professionals, students, volunteers and visitors engaged within our organization.

This document will describe the provision, systems and policies we have in place that demonstrate our compliance with our equality duty, and to set out our processes for consultation and development of this duty.

### **School Context**

Saxon Hill Academy is a Shaw Education Trust special academy in Lichfield, Staffordshire. We cater for children aged 2-19 with physical disabilities, complex medical needs, and associated sensory and learning difficulties from over south east Staffordshire. Saxon Hill Academy is commissioned by the Local Authority as part of the Special School offer in Staffordshire.

Saxon Hill has an 11 bed, short-break residential service known as SleepOver Club, providing extended day and overnight short breaks for our children and families.

Saxon Hill is commissioned to provide the county Physical Disability Support Service, in partnership with three other schools.

We currently have 93 children on roll. (December 2016)

### **Vision and values**

As a specialist school for children with complex needs, we believe passionately in providing the very best opportunities for all our children, irrespective of the complexity of need.

We aim to provide a safe and vibrant accessible learning environment that supports every child and young person to:

- To access the best opportunities to make progress with their learning
- Feel happy and safe
- Be confident when facing challenge
- To develop independence, communication and self-advocacy
- To become valued citizens

We believe in mutual respect for all members of our community

We believe in supporting the whole family as well as the child

We believe in engendering and enabling all members of our workforce to:

- develop and maximize their own potential
- Innovate and create opportunities for our children and families
- Be included in a professional and supportive environment
- Aim for the highest of professional standards

### **The School Offer**

Reference should be made the document “**Saxon Hill Academy – Our Local Offer**” which is available on our school website and by request. This details our provision as a specialist school for children and young people with physical disabilities and complex needs. Further information is also available on our school website:

[www.saxonhill.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.saxonhill.staffs.sch.uk)

## Progress and Attainment

We conduct an annual assessment of the progress made and attainment achieved by our children and young people. This information is collated and analysed to inform school leaders, governors and school improvement stakeholders of the successes and areas for development with regard to pupil progress.

The data analysis has due regard for disability, age, gender, ethnicity, and any other factor that may categorize a child as having additional disadvantage or needs. This includes having due regard for national requirements such as Pupil Premium, Sports Premium, Student Bursary scheme, Free School Meals and any other entitlements designed to reduce disadvantage.

This information is summarized in our annually published **Saxon Hill Dashboard** which is available on request subject to authorisation. This data is not made publically available due to the size of groups and cohorts that may identify individual children.

This data and its analysis inform our **School Development Plan** which is also available on request.

Reference should also be made to the school's **Ofsted reports** which offer an independent appraisal of the school and its effectiveness as measured against national standards.

- **Saxon Hill School Ofsted report:** <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/124520>
  - **and since Academy conversion:**
- <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/142094>
- **Residential Ofsted Social Care report:** <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/CARE/SC038728>
- **Community Pre-school Nursery Ofsted report:** <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/CARE/EY419669>

The school develops and adopts a wide range of policies and practices that underpin our commitment to our equality duty. This list is not exhaustive, but includes:

- Curriculum policy and practice
- Safeguarding Policy and review systems
- Health and Safety systems
- 16-19 Bursary
- Absence Policy for Staff
- Behaviour
- Complaints
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Whistleblowing
- Flexi-Schooling
- Performance Management
- Medication and Drugs

All new building development is compliant with current legislation. and meets building control regulations for access. We are currently applying for a Condition Improvement Fund bid (Dec 2016) for additional classroom space.

### **Involving disabled people**

We involve all stakeholders, including disabled people, in our consultation to help inform our planning.

This takes place in a number of ways across the school year, and as a focused survey.

- **School Council:**
  - A council of school students meets weekly to discuss their views on school provision. This covers safety and well-being as well as wider resource and provision requests. Council reps meet with the Headteacher to feedback meeting minutes and to consider any actions.
- **Parent Meetings:**
  - Various meetings including Annual Review of Statement / EHCP, tutor consultations, transition meetings and health and social care meetings that consider the education health and care needs of individual students on an on-going and regular basis. These conversations inform our provision and future planning.
  - Parent Support Group meets regularly to discuss common issues facing parents and their children in school.
- **School Surveys:**
  - Specific surveys are conducted to look at various aspects of our provision, and include focused surveys for access and inclusion. Surveys are conducted with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders.

### **Plans**

Our most recent plan has been published on the school website for period 2016 – 2019.

### **Physical environment**

Saxon Hill School has had many enhancements over the years since its opening in 1982. The school is fully accessible by wheelchair users, and includes a lift to access the first floor admin area.

Bathrooms and toilets are access compliant, and the school personal care area for pupils is fully accessible, with full hoisting and wet-rooms.

The residential provision in SleepOver Club is also fully accessible with hoisting and bathrooms fully accessible.

The school grounds have been developed in recent years to make greater areas wheelchair accessible, and to add to the sensory stimulus of the environment. This includes accessible horticulture, “forest school” and Yurt.

Car parking and school transport access is adequate, but is at capacity. Discussions are ongoing

regarding enhancing this provision.

School off-site facilities include a classroom at Shenstone Garden Centre, and two commercial units at Chasewater Park. These are both wheelchair accessible and have limited access to compliant toilets, although full hoisting and wet-rooms are not available.

### **Access to education, benefits, facilities and services (the whole life of the school)**

Saxon Hill School is a specialist school for children aged 2-19 with physical disabilities and complex medical needs. As such, the curriculum is specially adapted to meet the wide ranging needs, both across the age spectrum and the disability and sensory spectrum we cover.

Our curriculum offer is always under review, and has been recently restructured to reflect the different learning pathways our children follow. This has resulted in changes to our sensory curriculum offer, accreditation offer, and to our transition and work related learning offer.

Saxon Hill School is currently categorized by Ofsted (September 2013) as a GOOD school and identifies several outstanding aspects. Areas for improvement form part of the school development plan.

Our residential short-breaks service – “SleepOver Club” is currently categorized by Ofsted as OUTSTANDING in all areas.

We work closely with health and social care agencies to ensure a fully holistic provision that supports both children and families.

There are many extended activities including Aiming High funded sessions for Youth Club, Dance and Experience days; and other opportunities including an inclusive Scouts group, residential trips to Paris and Keswick, and many opportunities for students to learn off-site.

We have two fully accessible minibuses.

### **Access to written information**

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening form a core aspect of our education provision. We have many strategies to support the development of English and literacy skills, including strategies to support and develop communication through speech, signing and other augmented or assisted communication using hi and lo tech solutions.

The use of signing, symbols, and communication aids are widespread across the school, with new technologies being continuously explored. We work in close partnership with the Speech and Language Therapy Service and “Access to Communication and Technology (A.C.T)” at Selly Oak.

We are continuously developing the use of ICT technologies across the school with access to computers, interactive whiteboards, iPads and other devices that develop access to written and other information.

The school web-site is under review to better provide information in more accessible formats. This will include font-size adjustment, and colour / contrast adjustment.

**Updated December 2016**