

Inclusion Policy



Wistaston Academy
Primary and Nursery School
Together We Learn • Together We Achieve

Policy Author	Linda Davis, Principal
Responsible Governor's Committee	Standards
Date discussed at SLT Meeting	Spring 2014
Date discussed at Staff Consultation Committee	N/A
Date discussed at Staff Meeting	Spring 2014
Date established and approved by Governors	Spring 2014
Frequency of Review	Review in the light of changes to legislation or operating experience
Website	No

INCLUSION POLICY

Principles

Inclusion is concerned with the learning, participation and equal opportunities of all children and young people, all of whom have a right to access to the curriculum. It has wider implications than the identification of children and young people with special educational needs. It could apply to any or all of the following:

- girls or boys where there are gender issues;
- minority ethnic and faith groups, travellers, asylum seekers and refugees;
- children who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL);
- children with special educational needs including those considered to have emotional, **medical**, behavioural or social difficulties;
- children with physical disabilities
- children who may be gifted and talented;
- children in need including those in public care;
- other children, such as sick children; young carers; children from families under stress; pregnant school girls and teenage mothers; **children from armed forces families**, and children who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion from school;
- children whose families may be seriously disadvantaged by poverty and/or rural isolation;
- **children who may be educationally behind their peers who do not have special educational needs.**

Promoting inclusion will help all children and young people to realise their potential in terms of achievement, learning through access to curricular and extra-curricular activities within schools and other settings where diversity is understood and valued such as Youth Centres, libraries and outdoor education centres.

From Principles to Practice

Inclusive principles highlight the importance of meeting the individual needs of all children and young people equally, whether they have identified “special needs” or not. Inclusive schools and settings are those which are dedicated to meeting the individual needs of each child. Inclusion is a process in which pupils, parents or carers, teachers and other agencies or departments work together in partnership to develop the application of its principles in each setting.

Moving Forward

The Equalities Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas. In summary schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

Inclusion for the school will be underpinned by priorities identified in the Education Development Plan adopted as County Council policy in January 1999.

“ The County Council:

- *will work in partnership with all schools to promote inclusion – a policy which respects diversity and supports equal opportunities;*
- *aims to enable mainstream schools to become educational environments in which all children can thrive with due regard to the rights and preferences of individuals.”*

Implementation of the Inclusion Policy will require the continued commitment from Elected Members, Schools, Governors, the LEA, parents and pupils in order to:

1. Seek a greater understanding of inclusive education amongst stakeholders by

- 1.1 working in partnership with parents/carers and multi-professional agencies
- 1.2 promoting a wider understanding of disability equality issues
- 1.3 promoting definitions of achievement to which all learners can realistically aspire
- 1.4 ensuring that the language and images used to describe disaffected and/or disabled children and young people and/or those with other learning difficulties provide positive role models
- 1.5 ensuring that all progress towards inclusive education is identified and reported regularly to the council and throughout all partner agencies
- 1.6 collecting and disseminating information on best practice and best value

2. Enable all education settings and activities whether formal or informal to be fully accessible to all children and young people by

- 2.1 continuing to implement a planned programme of site and buildings alterations
- 2.2 ensuring accessible and appropriately presented information as required by the individual
- 2.3 making transport available, to and from school in line with the County Council’s policies
- 2.4 ensuring that all settings provide appropriate teaching methods which recognise a range of learning styles, providing training and support where necessary

- 2.5 ensuring the full range of curricular and extra-curricular activities is accessible
- 2.6 keeping the admissions policy under regular review to ensure that a disability experienced by a child or young person is not grounds for refusing admission
- 2.7 ultimately ensuring that inclusive education can be offered to any child or young person in his or her own community

3. Ensuring early identification, assessment, support and review of the needs of all children and young people by

- 3.1 ensuring flexible and prompt arrangements for identifying, reviewing and providing for all pupils' needs – whether temporary difficulties or setbacks, long term needs or serious incident or illness
- 3.2 empowering children and young people by developing their communication skills so that their views and feelings may be heard
- 3.3 ensuring effective guidance for the education service in fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Practice (2001) for SEN
- 3.4 ensuring safe, reliable and effective practices for communicating up-to-date information about children's needs
- 3.5 ensuring access and smooth transition from home-based to pre-school and pre-school to reception/Key Stage 1, and through each Key Stage into further education, training and work

4. Promote partnerships with parents/carers and other stakeholders.

- 4.1 by supporting parent partnership schemes
- 4.2 at School Action Plus of the Code of Practice (2001) offering parents a named SEN casework officer
- 4.3 seeking to improve communication between the LEA and parents/carers; the voluntary sector; schools and other agencies and departments so that there is a child-centred approach
- 4.4 seeking to contribute to and help promote effective multi-agency working, especially through the Joint Agency Teams where they are established
- 4.5 supporting the implementation of the Children's Services Plan with reference to vulnerable children including those who are disabled, disaffected or have other special learning needs
- 4.6 supporting schools in working with families/carers

5. Ensure the effective use of resources towards prevention and early intervention by

- 5.1 recognising that adequate resourcing is the key to the confidence with which staff feel able to include disabled and disaffected learners
 - 5.2 channelling resources towards prevention and early intervention
 - 5.3 considering the best value to be provided by comparing inclusive mainstream options with specialist provision
 - 5.4 containing the need to allocate resources primarily through Individual Pupil Funding and occasionally Statementing.
 - 5.5 ensuring effective management of the assessment and review processes
 - 5.6 monitoring the effective and efficient use of school budgets for SEN
 - 5.7 seeking efficient use of resources through close partnership working
 - 5.8 undertaking regular best value reviews
 - 5.9 continually seeking new opportunities for increasing funding through the pursuit of excellence and relevant development projects
 - 5.10 working with the Early years Development and Childcare Partnership to promote the benefits of investing in work with young children
 - 5.11 working with the statutory and voluntary sector Youth Service to explore alternative intervention approaches to working with young people likely to be at particular risk of exclusion
 - 5.12 supporting schools in developing opportunities for a range of accreditation and learning programmes, within mainstream, part-time access to other settings and through timely and effective transition planning
6. Promote collaboration between special and mainstream schools as well as other education providers to enable the sharing of expertise and flexible responses to the needs of all children and young people
- 6.1 providing model policies demonstrating how the school can ensure that pupils fully belong, having access to all its activities, whilst being entitled to appropriate support to meet their educational needs
 - 6.2 raising awareness of all staff with regard to disability equality, disaffection and the range of barriers to learning
 - 6.3 promoting curriculum development and ensuring differentiated learning experiences to match the needs of the widest possible range of learners

- 6.4 promoting self-evaluation with regular support and access to effective audit practices
- 6.5 offering a programme of training for school staff and governors to support implementation of this policy which is regularly reviewed and updated

7. Monitor appropriate indicators to measure the success of the inclusion policy

- 7.1 ensuring that appropriate targets are set and met at school and individual levels
- 7.2 tracking the progress of children successfully supported in their early years to assess the impact on later learning
- 7.3 monitoring the success and speed of assessment and placement of children and young people
- 7.4 engaging in regular exchange of information with parents/carers and parent groups
- 7.5 ensuring sufficient disagreement resolution services are continually accessible
- 7.6 ensuring that disputes and tribunals reduce year on year and are kept to an absolute minimum
- 7.7 providing current and accessible information for parents/carers covering SEN policy and provision

8. Review the effectiveness and the fuller development of the inclusion policy by

- 8.1 ensuring that the implementation of this policy fits within the context of the broader Equal Opportunities policy of the council and does not at any point detrimentally affect the learning entitlements of non-disaffected or non-disabled children and young people

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

All schools are required, by Section 29 of the 2002 Education Act, to establish a complaints procedure and to publicise that procedure. It is anticipated that this will include clear signposting to the procedure in any appropriate school publications, which should indicate that a copy of the full procedure is available on the school website and in the school office.

The intention of this procedure is to provide schools with a clear and transparent process that will enable all complaints to be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The length of time that this takes will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency

with which it needs to be settled. However, all complaints should be settled within a period which is reasonable in the circumstances.

The procedure takes into account the principles laid down in the DCSF guidance on school complaints procedures.

All references to working days refer to days on which the school is open to pupils and for staff training days.

This procedure has been agreed with Cheshire Association of Primary Heads, Cheshire Association of Secondary Heads, Cheshire Association of Special School Heads, Cheshire Association of Governing Bodies and the relevant Diocesan Authorities.

2. Scope of the Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints against the school by external persons/parties which do not have an alternative statutory avenue of appeal or complaint, i.e. admissions, exclusions, delivery of National Curriculum, some safeguarding children issues, provision of collective worship and religious education and SEN assessments. Where complaints make allegations of misconduct against members of staff this procedure may be superseded by use of the staff disciplinary procedure or other appropriate staffing procedure.

Employees of the school cannot use this procedure but, where necessary, should raise concerns via the appropriate staffing procedure, full details of which are available from the school.

3. General Principles

All complaints should be dealt with in a transparent way and as quickly as is reasonably practicable. Complainants should be kept informed during the investigation of their complaint and of the outcome, except where this is confidential, e.g. in the case of a staff disciplinary process. Every effort should be made to resolve complaints in a non-confrontational and informal way.

Where the timescales within this procedure cannot be adhered to, the complainant should be informed as to why this is the case, and given a revised timescale for dealing with the complaint. This should be done within the specified timescale.

Governing Bodies should ensure that they have appropriate arrangements for recording complaints and the way in which they are resolved. Further, that they will regularly (at least once per school year), monitor the nature and level of complaints, so as to best ensure the effectiveness of the procedure, and consider any underlying issues the school may need to address, including whether specific actions identified by governors' appeal panels have been addressed.

There may be rare occasions when, despite all the stages of the procedure having been followed, a complainant remains dissatisfied. If s/he subsequently seeks to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors has the right to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed.

Advice on the operation of the procedure is available from the manager of the School Governance Service, who may also seek the advice and/or involvement of other Local Authority (LA) officers as appropriate. In exceptional cases a LA officer may agree to a request to attend a formal complaint hearing to advise the governors. Such requests should be made via the School Governance Service. In Voluntary Aided schools, where necessary and appropriate, advice may also be sought from the appropriate Diocesan Officer; in these circumstances the LA and Diocesan Officers would seek to collaborate over the resolution of the complaint. The role of the Diocesan Officer will be particularly important in any complaint which relates to the faith aspect of the school or to the delivery of Religious Education.

4. Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure schools will want to consider the ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

5. Stages of the Procedure

Many concerns and minor complaints can be resolved quickly and informally. There are many occasions where issues are resolved immediately through the class teacher or another member of staff, depending upon the nature of the complaint. Unless there are exceptional circumstances every effort should be made by the school to have a full discussion with the complainant before moving into the stages of this procedure.

Informal Stage

If the concern/complaint is not resolved through such discussion, the complainant should contact the Headteacher. The complaint should be made in writing by the complainant, or by another person on their behalf, with their consent (by letter or email).

The Headteacher, or other member of staff nominated by him/her, should meet with the complainant to discuss his/her concerns within ten working days of receiving the complaint. Where necessary the Headteacher, or other nominated member of staff, should carry out a full investigation into the issues raised. The Headteacher will give a written response to the complainant as soon as possible but, in any case, within ten working days of this meeting. Where the complainant is dissatisfied with this response, the complaint should move to the first formal stage of the procedure.

Where the complaint is against the Headteacher the informal stage should be conducted by the Chair of Governors. If the complaint progresses to the formal stage this will be conducted by the Vice Chair or other nominated governor.

Where the complaint is against the Chair of Governors the informal stage should be conducted by the Vice Chair of Governors, or another governor nominated by him/her. If the complaint progresses to the formal stage this will be conducted by another nominated governor.

Formal Stage

If the complaint cannot satisfactorily be resolved informally, the complainant should put their complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors (or Vice Chair/ nominated governor where the complaint is against the Headteacher/Chair of Governors), which may be by letter or email, via the school. The Chair/Vice Chair/nominated governor should meet with the complainant to discuss his/her concerns within ten working days of receiving the complaint, or as soon as is reasonably practicable after this.

The Chair/Vice Chair/nominated governor will review the investigation and Headteacher's decision and may confirm this decision or reach a different decision. The Chair/Vice Chair/nominated governor may take advice initially from the manager of the School Governance Service, who may consult other LA officers, and also from Diocesan Officers where appropriate.

The Chair/Vice Chair will communicate his/her response in writing to the complainant as soon as possible but, in any case, within ten working days of receiving the written complaint.

Where the complainant is dissatisfied with this response the complaint should move to the appeal stage of the procedure.

Appeal Stage

The complainant should send a written appeal to the Chair of Governors, either by letter or email, or, where the complaint is against the Chair, to the Vice-Chair or other nominated governor. This should state the original complaint and the reasons for on-going dissatisfaction. The Chair of Governors, or nominated governor, may decline to accept a complaint into the Appeal Stage where s/he, acting reasonably, believes that the complaint has been wholly upheld at the Formal Stage and in all the circumstances there is no merit in the matter proceeding further.

A governors' panel should be convened, consisting of three governors who have had no previous involvement in consideration of the complaint. Where the complainant is a parent, governors may wish to consider the possible advantages of this panel including a parent governor. A complaints appeal meeting will be held in accordance with the procedure attached as Appendix A.

The meeting of the governors' panel should take place as soon as possible, but in any case a date should be set and communicated to the complainant within twenty working days of receipt of the appeal. The governors' decision should be communicated in writing to the

complainant as soon as possible but, in any case, within five working days of the meeting. The complainant will have no further right to appeal this decision.

6. Opportunities to Request a Review

Review by the Local Authority

Where the complainant can provide written grounds that demonstrate that the Governing Body may have acted unreasonably or failed to follow this procedure, s/he may request that the situation be reviewed by the Director of Children's Services or his/her nominee. This will be an officer of the LA, except in the case of Voluntary Aided Schools where the review may be conducted by a Diocesan Officer, as agreed with the Diocese.

It is anticipated that the LA/Diocese would intervene only in very rare cases where the reviewing officer believed that the Governing Body may have acted procedurally incorrectly or arrived at an outcome which appeared, in all the circumstances, to be unreasonable.

Complaining to the Secretary of State

If a complainant believes that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably s/he can complain in writing to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. Complaints to the Secretary of State are handled by the government's Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Complaining to Ofsted

Ofsted has powers to investigate certain types of complaint from parents to help them to decide whether to inspect a school.

Before complaining to the Local Authority, the Secretary of State or Ofsted, it would usually be expected that all stages of this procedure had been exhausted.

7. The Role of the Parent Partnership Service

The Parent Partnership Service helps parents/carers whose children have difficulties with learning, medical needs or mental health problems, from pre-school age to school leavers. The service is confidential and offers impartial advice and information to enable parents and carers to make decisions about their child's education. This includes supporting parents with complaints to schools or the Local Authority.

The service can help parents consider what their complaint is about and the options available to them to resolve it, including more informal measures that can be explored in the first instance. If a parent wishes, the service can explain how to put a letter/case together to take the matter forward. Someone from the service can attend meetings with the parent to offer support but doesn't speak on behalf of or make decisions for the parent. The service also offers support after meetings have taken place to consider the conclusions of the meeting and if the parent feels a satisfactory outcome was achieved. If not the parent may have further options to consider.

Contact details for the service are:

Parent Partnership Service Cheshire East

Delamere House

Delamere Street

Crewe

CW1 2LL

Telephone number: 01625 374278

E-mail: parentpartnership@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Name of School: Wistaston Academy

Date of adoption by Governing Body: 09.10.12

APPENDIX A

Conduct of Complaints Appeal Meetings

- 1 Although this procedure may appear formal, the hearing should be conducted in as informal as way as possible, and the Chair of the panel should make every effort to make all parties feel comfortable.
- 2 The date of the meeting must be agreed with all parties and witnesses and all relevant documentation must be circulated to all parties at least five working days in advance of the meeting.
- 3 The meeting should be minuted.
- 4 The meeting will be attended by:
 - the complainant, with a companion if desired;
 - the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors, as appropriate;
 - the members of the Governors' Complaints Panel;
 - a minute taker, appointed by the governors;
 - a LA Officer to advise the Governors' Panel, where this has been requested and agreed to under paragraph 3 of the procedure.

Members of staff who have been involved in the issue, or other witnesses, may be called upon by either side to attend part of the meeting to provide information to the governors.

- 5 The governors will select a Chair from amongst their number.
- 6 The Chair of the panel will introduce all the parties present and explain the procedure to be followed, and that every will be effort be made to keep the process as informal as possible.
- 7 The complainant (or his/her companion) will outline his/her complaint and explain why s/he is dissatisfied with the school's response to date. The complainant may call any witnesses in support of his/her complaint who will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information, and may be questioned by all parties.
- 8 The Headteacher and the governors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant.
- 9 The Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors will explain their involvement in the complaint and the reasons for their decisions at the informal and first formal stage. The Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors may call any witnesses in support of his/her statement who will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information, and may be questioned by all parties
- 10 The complainant and the governors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors.

- 11 The governors may decide to adjourn the hearing pending further investigation at any stage, if this seems necessary.
- 12 Both parties will leave the meeting and the governors will consider the information that has been put to them.
- 13 The governors' panel must reach a unanimous or majority decision as to whether or not to uphold the complaint wholly or in part, and what action (if any) the school needs to take to resolve the complaint. This may include referring the matter to another formal process, whether in relation to a complaint against a governor or a member of the school staff. Normally the governors will reach a decision at this point but they may feel the need to take further advice. Where this is the case they should endeavour to reach a decision as soon as possible.
- 14 The governors will communicate their response to both parties in writing as soon as possible but, in any case, within five working days of reaching their decision. The governors' response should detail whether the complaint is upheld wholly or in part and briefly summarise the basis on which governors arrived at this conclusion. The response should also include any lessons learnt and specify any action to be taken by the school as a result of the complaint and within what timescales.