

ALT BRIDGE SCHOOL

Single Equality Scheme 2018 – 2021



Reviewed by	Date	Signature
Mr. S. Farrimond	25.01.19	
T & L Committee	07.02.19	
Addendum COVID added	June 2020	
S. Gannon		

Alt Bridge School Single Equality Duty Scheme 2018 – 2021

Mission Statement: Values, Ethos and Vision

Alt Bridge seeks to meet the needs of secondary age pupils with a variety of complex learning difficulties. Additionally, from September '08 the school will provide a base for C.Y.P with social and communication difficulties. The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation.

Whilst pupils are attending Alt Bridge, we seek to:-

- Prepare pupils with learning difficulties for post-school life
- Meet identified special needs and the requirement of the National Curriculum
- Maintain and further develop a positive, caring and ordered environment

Central to this vision are the core elements set out in 'Every Child Matters' in which we strive to help secure five main outcomes for each one of our pupils:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Being enabled to make a positive contribution
- Achievement of economic well-being

It is also unlawful for the school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their:

- sex equality
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity
- marriage & civil partnership

Alt Bridge is a caring and challenging community catering for the needs of 11-19 S.E.N. youngsters from across the borough of Knowsley. We aim to develop confidence, tolerance, self-discipline and respect for each individual in the personal, creative and physical needs of each child. We encourage

collaboration and co-operation, whilst at the same time, fostering individual initiative and leadership to allow each pupil to maximise his or her potential.

The teaching programme attempts to balance the needs, abilities and aptitudes of each individual with demands of our rapidly changing world. We strive for breadth, balance and relevance in the curriculum, and for the acquisition of knowledge, the understanding of concepts and ideas and the adoption of positive values and attitudes within a developmental framework.

We regard the Centre as an integral part of the community and aim to equip our pupils with the ability to follow active, enjoyable and responsible lives at work and at leisure. We wish to develop social skills, good relationships with peers, and self-discipline within the school and home.

We want our pupils to become responsible adults, having maximised their academic potential, realised the full worth of others, and developed the ability to live as independently as possible.

We are committed to ensuring equal treatment of all our pupils, parents/carers, employees and any others involved in the school community, who may have any form of disability. We will ensure that disabled young people and adults are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices or service delivery.

The school acknowledges the fact that reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, staff and parents/carers are essential to support children in achieving the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes.

Our school will not tolerate harassment of young people or adults with any form of impairment this also includes pupils who are carers of disabled family members or parents.

This scheme should be read in conjunction with the Accessibility Plan; Bullying Policy; Behaviour Policy; (incorporating the Anti-Bullying Policy); Education Visits Policy; SEN Policy; Recruitment and Selection.

Reasonable Adjustments

The school is required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils and stakeholders of the school are not put at a substantial disadvantage and are able to access the same opportunities as non-disabled peers. Specifically, the school intends that disabled pupils and users will have the same access to the curriculum, to information and access to the school environment and facilities as non-disabled pupils and users. In planning developments to deliver this intention the school considers the needs of current and future pupils and users of the school. The main strategies to bring out reasonable adjustments in the next three years are described in the Accessibility Plan, however reasonable adjustments are made on an individual basis according to need, by working collaboratively with disabled

persons and/or their parents. In deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

- The extent to which the adjustment would prevent the disadvantage suffered by the disabled person
- The practicality of the adjustment
- The availability of financial assistance
- The financial burden of making the adjustment
- The size of the school

The school will be successful in making the reasonable adjustments when disabled person can, wherever possible, participate fully

- In the classroom
- In the school curriculum
- At all times and in all parts of the building

And when

- Disabled persons feel part of the life of the school
- Disabled persons are included by their peers in all parts of school life
- Parents of disabled students feel their child is part of the life of the school
- Staff feel confident in working with disabled pupils

Our Duties and the role of the Governing Body

The General Duty requires that every public authority should:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life

- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people

Public bodies are required to comply with the Specific Duties which are:

- To publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) which includes a three year Action Plan
- To involve disabled people in the development of the DES
- To take the steps set out in the Action Plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so)
- To publish an annual report on progress with the Action Plan

Governing bodies are required to:

- Promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: pupils, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to; and
- Prepare and publish a disability equality scheme to show how they will meet these duties.

This scheme and the accompanying Action Plan set out how the governing body of Alt Bridge School will promote equality of opportunity for young people and adults.

The governing body to increase access to education for disabled pupils in 3 ways:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

Equality objectives

The School stands against all forms of discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability or ability. We will use performance data to monitor student achievement and respond to variations between groups of learners, subjects, courses and key stages, trends over time and comparisons with other schools.

This is achieved through the following objectives:

1. Promotion of cultural understanding and awareness of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our school community.
2. Monitoring and promotion of the involvement of all groups of students in lunch time clubs of the school, including leadership opportunities (peer mentors).
3. Actively close gaps in attainment and achievement between students and all groups of students; especially students eligible for free-school meals, students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and students from minority ethnic groups.
4. Continue to improve accessibility across the school for students, staff and visitors with disabilities, including access to specialist teaching areas.
5. Endeavour to ensure that the staff body and representation of staff in leadership roles is reflective of the local community.
6. Reduce the incidence of the use of homophobic, sexist and racist language by students in the school.
7. To increase the level of pupil voice by extending our school council to include a fair representation of all pupils in school, and in this way to foster good relationships in the school between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not

Accessibility Plan

The school's accessibility plan outlines the school's vision and values for improving children's access to the curriculum, to the environment and to information provided by the school.

What do we understand by "disability"?

At Alt Bridge School we promote disability equality and prepare all our young people for life in a diverse society. We use the term 'disabled' to refer to someone who has:

- A physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments, impairment relating to mental functioning including learning disabilities, long term health conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, cancer or Multiple Sclerosis.

We do not interchange the term disabled with the phrase special educational needs although we appreciate that many pupils with SEN will also have disabilities.

The definition of impairment we use includes hidden impairments such as severe dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as well as:

- '*physical impairment*' which includes sensory impairment;
- '*mental impairment*' which includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness.

We believe that an impairment does not of itself mean that a pupil is disabled. It is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities that has to be considered.

In relation to normal day-to-day activity the test of whether an impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one or more of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity;
- Physical co-ordination;
- Continence;
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- Speech, hearing or eyesight;
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand;
- Perception of risk of physical danger

We recognise that individual cases need to be judged and responded to.

Involvement and consultation

Alt Bridge School has consulted with disabled pupils staff and stakeholders in the development of our Disability Equality Duty Scheme. This consultation took the form of questionnaires and meetings. These consultations will be ongoing, in order to monitor the impact of our scheme and evaluate our actions to inform future planning.

Gathering information

It is very difficult to collect accurate data and make an assessment of disability amongst our parents and others in our school community. This is because of issues of privacy and confidentiality. This can also be the case for some members of staff. As a result of the difficulties in gathering such information it is not possible to produce reliable statistics on these groups. However, it should be noted that the school recognises its responsibilities towards all parents, staff and other stakeholders and promotes inclusion and access for all.

Information is gathered from a variety of sources:

- Medical registers
- SEN register
- Questionnaires
- School Performance Data
- School council discussion and minutes
- Data analysis

To meet the Disability Equality Duty, it is essential that we monitor aspects of school life to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children with disabilities.

The school monitors its provision in the following areas and pays regard to:

- The role of a school as a service provider - to meet the needs of the 'customer'
- Contact with parents and carers - paying due regard to any parents who cannot read information and other communication from school
- Annual review meetings - we ensure that there is access to all school activities for disabled friends or family

Assessing the impact of school policies

In order to ensure that action is taken to meet the Disability Equality Duty, Alt Bridge School will review all policies on a rolling programme and will take into account views gathered from all stakeholders, including those with disabilities, in assessing the impact of school policies.

At Alt Bridge School we aim to meet the requirements of the 6 duties through:

1. Promoting equality of opportunity
 - By awareness raising and staff training;
 - By keeping a watchful eye on the impact of policies;
 - Reviewing and adjusting policies;
 - Raising expectations;
 - Improving communication;
 - Increase awareness of the ways in which parents of disabled children and young people can be supported in their learning
 - Ensuring that the talents of disabled pupils are represented accordingly through the Gifted and Talented Registers.
2. Eliminating harassment and bullying
 - Raising awareness amongst staff and pupils of disability related harassment;

- Understanding the nature and prevalence of bullying and harassment;
- Recognising and addressing bullying and harassment;
- Involving pupils themselves in combating bullying;
- Reviewing school anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Ensuring that disability –related harassment of disabled staff, parents, carers and other users of the school is identified and addressed;
- The use of SEAL materials;
- If a number of incidents have been prevalent within a particular year group, use circle time, story time or assembly to investigate and address the issue with all pupils.

3. Discrimination

4. Promoting positive attitudes

- By staff modelling respectful attitudes to disabled pupils, staff and parents;
- By challenging negativity;
- By being aware of the need to represent disabled people in senior positions in the school;
- Through the curriculum – SEAL/PSHCE/RE;
- Through positive images in school books and other materials;
- Ensure that disability is represented in posters, collages, displays and learning materials;
- Inviting disabled members of the community/organisations to talk to children.

5. Encouraging participation in public life

- Where possible disabled pupils, staff and parents are represented in senior, responsible and representative roles;
- There are positive images of disabled people participating.
- Ensure that disabled pupils are represented and encouraged to participate in class assemblies, plays, events, and on the school council.

6. Taking steps to meet disabled peoples needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

- Special facilities for disabled pupils at breaks and lunchtimes;
- A policy of interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum requirements for the job.

Action Plan

Our Action Plan forms part of our Disability Equality Scheme and shows what we intend to do over the next three years to meet the needs of our school community and our statutory duties. We recognise that in our changing

population our plan will need to be reviewed annually and its impact measured.

Overall responsibility for the plan is taken by the Head Teacher and the Governing Body. The everyday implementation of the plan is the responsibility of all staff.

The Scheme: Specific Duty

General Duty Main Actions	Action
Promote equality of opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference school accessibility plan. • As an equal opportunities employer we would ensure that reasonable steps were taken to enable a member of staff with a disability was able to participate fully in school life • Actively seek views of pupils, staff and users of the school.
Eliminating Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff training includes consideration/implications towards any disability. • Ensure health and safety considerations are met and relevant training provided e.g. team-teach. • Ensure policy review considers the impact of disabilities • Lesson planning considers full involvement of pupils with disabilities
Eliminating Harrassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness amongst staff and pupils of disability related harassment via anti-bullying policy. • Reference SEAL, PSHCE programme of work eg using circle time, assemblies, citizenship etc.
Promoting positive attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By staff modelling respectful attitudes to disabled pupils, staff and parents; • By challenging negativity; • By being aware of the need to represent disabled people in senior positions in the school; • Through the curriculum – SEAL/PSHCE/RE; • Through positive images in school books and other materials; • Ensure that disability is represented in posters, collages, displays and learning materials; • Inviting disabled members of the community/organisations to talk to children.

<p>Encouraging participation in public life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure where possible disabled pupils, staff and parents are represented in senior, responsible and representative roles; • Ensure there are positive images of disabled people participating. • Ensure that disabled pupils are represented and encouraged to participate in class assemblies, plays, events, and on the school council.
<p>Taking steps to meet disabled peoples' needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to the school – practical steps are taken to ensure visitors' needs are met. Eg disabled toilet facility, disabled access parking in close proximity to the school, preferential seating when required, assigning a person to support where necessary. • Pupils – ensuring that their needs and wishes were taken into account when making decisions regarding participation in school life. eg special facilities for pupils and breaks and lunchtimes, school trips and residential. • Staff – training where necessary. • A policy of interviewing all disabled applicants who meet minimum requirements of the job. • Additional coaching or training for disabled pupils, staff or parents.

Monitoring and reporting

This action plan will be reviewed every year by the Teaching and Learning Committee. There will be a more formal evaluation at the end of the 3 year cycle. Details of how copies of the school's Disability Equality Policy can be obtained will be made available in the school prospectus and on the school web site.



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Schools and COVID-19: guidance for Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff and their employers in school settings.

At the start of May 2020, the NHS released their call to action to support BAME NHS people and communities during and beyond COVID-19. A draft NHS England document proposed trusts ensure every staff member has a risk assessment to keep them safe, and that guidance will be provided to support employers to create proactive approaches for BAME staff, covering physical and mental health.

While it may not yet be clear why the danger of contracting COVID-19 and subsequent mortality rates are higher for BAME colleagues, it should be clear that a bespoke health and wellbeing offer for BAME staff should be developed and rolled out not just within the NHS, but also across the education system as we start to encourage more teachers and children back into face to face contact. Through acknowledging the very different outcomes for BAME people in particular with regards COVID-19, this could be a vital opportunity to not only put in place safeguards for colleagues now, but also affect lasting change in the imbalance of power, decision-making and representation for BAME colleagues within our education organisations as a whole for the long term.

The following are what an equivalent set of top five calls to action would look like in the education sector if they were to mirror that of the NHS guidance:

- 1) **Protection of staff** which includes risk assessments that specifically take into account the physical and mental health of BAME staff. The NHS has provided guidance for employers on risk prioritisation and management which includes ethnicity. This includes ensuring that line managers are supported to hold conversations with BAME staff that are sensitive and comprehensive, and that these should be held on an ongoing basis as physical and mental health are prone to changes.

- 2) **Engagement with staff** and relevant networks is paramount. Communication with these should be strengthened so that managers can hear and learn from lived experience - this includes initiating webinars and facilitated discussions including BAME and non-BAME colleagues within unions, MATs, BAME network leaders, local authorities, the DfE, leadership and governance associations and other stakeholders with the aim of starting a meaningful dialogue that will result in some real change across the education sector.

- 3) **Representation in decision making** is critical to include BAME staff as key influencers in decisions that may be made that directly affect them. There should be a national audit of BAME representation (segmented into the respective groups and not lumped together as a broad category of 'non-white' peoples) across educational leadership, governance and leading policy-making functions of all education organisations. This should be tackled head on and the imbalance addressed from school level and right up into government policy as a matter of urgency.

- 4) **Rehabilitation and recovery** to make sure there is bespoke and continuing health and wellbeing support throughout and beyond the crisis. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities is acute, both personally and professionally. Teaching colleagues are already under pressure as frontline actors in uncertain times. We need to ensure that the unique needs of our BAME colleagues are met both now, and in the future. This could be the start of a long-awaited change.

- 5) **Communications and media.** The media representations of the education sector do not tend to include BAME colleagues. To create positive representations from, with and about BAME staff and students, we should be holding to account all education organisations from the smallest school settings and through to the higher echelons of decision-makers and power holders, to ensure that their media and other communications are positive about BAME colleagues and students and representative in terms of optics as well as content matter.

We are indebted to our education professionals, teachers and support staff alike, who are going above and beyond to adapt and excel, teaching and caring for the young people they serve in these difficult times. We need to harness our collective passion, and commitment to true equality for all, at a time of increased complexity, challenge and emotional strain. We hope we can make real and lasting change for our BAME colleagues and the communities we all serve.

The duty of care

There are a range of statutory requirements that together form part of the duty of care that schools owe to their staff, and by extension to pupils and visitors such as parents. In the school setting these would include

- **Section 1 (2) Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** which states: “It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees.”
- **Regulation 3 (1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** which provides that: “Every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking”
- An Equality Impact Assessment or some other means of meeting the requirement of the **Public Sector Equality Duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010**, which requires public authorities to have due regard to a number of equality considerations when exercising their functions.

The duty of care is to all staff, and by extension pupils and visitors. No one should work in an environment where foreseeable risk has not been mitigated or removed as far as is reasonably practicable. Staff (including managers) have a duty of care to themselves, to colleagues, to those they manage or employ and to those they provide services to.

We know from Public Health England, from the Office of National Statistics and from a range of recently published research that some groups of people are more at risk from COVID 19, notably those with certain long term health conditions. BAME staff are particularly at risk, and the NHS has specifically identified the importance of risk assessments for BAME staff

This evidence has underpinned the NHS approach to risk assessment for all staff, not simply those in high risk areas. The core document being used to underpin risk assessments is <https://www.fom.ac.uk/covid-19/update-risk-reduction-framework-for-nhs-staff-at-risk-of-covid-19-infection>

If we were to have a parallel risk assessment guidance document and tool for staff in education settings, they may look like this: 3 Produced by the BAMEed Network May 2020, to be used as a guide only Last updated 24/05/2020

Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff in school settings

Introduction

There is an officially acknowledged high and disproportionate number of deaths of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people due to COVID-19.

As such, there is a need for initial guidance on risk mitigation for urgent implementation across all education settings.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment should be carried out for all staff, but especially for BAME staff as a priority, so that a personalised risk mitigation plan can be put in place for each member of staff. This requires an open and collaborative one to one conversation between the staff member and line manager, aided by the HR or occupational health team as required. It should be conducted within a “done with”, co-production approach with the staff member, and not a “done to” approach. This means that the staff member should see the risk assessment document and paperwork before the one to one conversation takes place.

Risk mitigation

Surveys and accounts from various professional medical and nursing bodies indicate that BAME staff face particular issues with being supported with measures to reduce their exposure to risk. The assumption is that this may be the same across other caring professions, including for teaching and school support staff professionals.

Measures to reduce exposure to risk must be implemented as a priority to protect the lives of staff and students. The measures will need to be in place for some time as the pandemic takes its course, so need to be sustainable. There is a widespread assumption at senior levels of the NHS that a “second wave” of COVID 19 is likely in late Autumn 2020. Regular feedback to see whether interventions are working is vital.

Long term work designed to improve organisational culture and capability will also enhance risk management.

Personal protection equipment (PPE) Appropriate PPE should be made available and clear instruction and training should be provided to school staff regarding how to wear and dispose of, or re-use these, where fitting. There is ongoing debate for and against use of face masks/face coverings in general for staff, students and the public - guidance should be updated as the evidence evolves and is made available.

Students should be offered an explanation and reassurance about staff wearing PPE.

Staff testing

There is now a national testing process for England. It should be offered to staff with consideration given to prioritising BAME staff and their families, to enable healthy staff to attend work.

Aids for remote working

It is advised that organisations provide resources for remote working for all staff as priority.

Redeployment 4 Produced by the BAMEed Network May 2020, to be used as a guide only Last updated 24/05/2020

BAME staff should be considered for redeployment to lower risk work areas or home working. A proactive offer by the manager as part of an ongoing review, keeping staff needs in mind, will engender confidence that the staff members' needs are being taken seriously.

Working from home

If completely working from home or redeployment is not possible, a balance between working from home and school may be a way of reducing COVID-19 risk exposure. This should be carefully and actively considered rather than staff being made to feel guilty.

Other infection prevention and control measures

Social distancing in all work areas including staff rooms, classrooms and dining areas and hand washing should be undertaken as described in national guidance and should be strictly maintained.

Support for BAME school setting employees to manage additional impact of COVID-19

Vitamin D supplements Although there is no evidence to suggest that Vitamin D gives specific protection against COVID-19 or prevents complications associated with the virus, low levels of Vitamin D may predispose to severe infection. Staff should be encouraged to have their Vitamin D levels tested, especially BAME staff members. Line managers should meet to discuss ways of making this advice available to staff, especially BAME staff as a priority, as they may be overrepresented in those with low levels of Vitamin D.

BAME staff engagement

Engagement with BAME employees should be a priority, including any staff networks, committees, union and other representative groups that should be invited to Q&A and other engagement events with senior staff. This can ensure the BAME voice is heard by leaders. Staff forums can be useful mediums to initiate debate. It is vital to discuss this issue in all mainstream staff side forums and not just with BAME colleagues. These issues are not just BAME issues but have relevance to all staff and to the whole organisation.

Psychological safety

Staff will need reminders of avenues available to speak out about issues such as poor access to equipment, bullying, and other issues, with an aim to reduce fear of raising concerns and ensuring there is a safe space to do so.

The risk assessment process

The risk assessment tool (below) is a means of structuring the assessment 5
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Risk assessment tool for staff during the COVID-19 pandemic General information

Staff member's name(s)	Job title
Line manager	Manager's job title
Work location	Working hours
Date of assessment	Review date
Individuals <i>Please tick</i>	Current post <i>Please tick</i>
underlying health <i>appropriate box</i>	involves <i>appropriate box</i>
condition	
category / other factors	
Notified as on 12 week shielding (very high risk group)	Direct contact with other adults
Age (>65 years)	Direct contact with children under 12
Please tick if age is over 50 for BAME staff	
Diabetes	Direct contact with children over 12
Chronic lung disease	Providing support to colleagues within the setting (e.g. cleaning, estates, IT)
	Providing support to colleagues but not directly in the setting (e.g. training)
Chronic heart disease	
Cancer	
Pregnancy please tick if over 28 weeks, under 28 weeks if pre-existing risks present	
Immunosuppression	
Pre-existing disability that impacts on respiratory morbidity	

Safeguarding

All policies at Alt Bridge are written taking account of developments in Safeguarding and Child Protection and Equal Opportunities.

This policy, Disability Equality Duty Scheme should be read in conjunction with the following policies:-

- Equality Act 2010
- Allegations Management
- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Equality Scheme (including Race & Gender)
- Exclusions
- Internet & E-Safety
- PHSE (including Drug Prevention)
- Positive Handling
- Safer Recruitment
- Visits and School Trips