

Education inclusion of deaf children position statement

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1. Position statement on educational inclusion

- 1.1 An inclusive school (or other education setting) expects all children or students within its community to be educated together. It sees the diverse needs of children and students as a rich vein of opportunity to develop its approaches to teaching and learning and thereby achieve excellence for all learners.
- 1.2 Inclusion is not a placement issue. It is about children belonging to a community. In the case of education, this community can be a school, college or early years setting.
- 1.3 On the basis of our consultations with deaf children and young people, the National Deaf Children's Society believes that in an inclusive school or education setting a deaf child will:
 - a) feel they belong to the school or education community
 - b) feel valued and respected as an individual
 - c) feel safe and free from bullying and teasing related to their deafness
 - d) be given opportunities to mix with deaf children as well as hearing children
 - e) have their communication needs met
 - f) be given support to build their confidence and self esteem
 - g) be able to participate in all aspects of school life alongside their peers
 - h) be supported in reaching their full educational potential.

2. Policy on equal educational opportunities for deaf children

2.1 NDCS will work to influence and challenge decision-makers so that:

- a) deaf children and young people are not treated less favourably on the grounds of their disability
- b) policies, plans, procedures, processes and practices of educational services both nationally and locally do not unfairly or unjustifiably limit educational opportunities for deaf children or indirectly discriminate against them
- c) there is equal access to educational services through policies and practices that take account of the needs of deaf children
- d) they take positive action to ensure deaf children and young people are not disadvantaged and have the opportunity to achieve their full educational potential

3. The characteristics of a school that promotes the inclusion of deaf children and offers equal opportunities

3.1 For deaf children to experience successful inclusion and equal opportunity, their educational placement must be deaf friendly and work to improve outcomes for all deaf children.

3.2 The school should ensure the following:

3.2.1 Ethos

- a) there is a whole school approach to the education of deaf children that is reflected in the school's vision and values
- b) the whole school fosters a positive attitude to deafness and deaf issues
- c) every deaf child is treated as an individual and feels valued
- d) there are opportunities for deaf and hearing children to mix together and establish true and equal friendships
- e) there is effective communication between pupils and staff, both educationally and socially (whether signed or spoken). Where deaf children's chosen communication mode is British Sign Language, this should involve hearing children and teachers acquiring competence in signed communication
- f) the promotion of positive deaf identity with regular opportunities for deaf children to have contact with deaf adults and older deaf children as positive role models and, where they attend mainstream schools, opportunities to contact other deaf children of the same age.
- g) the achievements of deaf children are celebrated

3.2.2 Leadership and management

- a) the head teacher and governing body lead by example, having a positive attitude to deafness, effective communication with deaf children and adults and ensuring deaf friendly teaching practices
- b) the school's vision and values are clearly communicated by the head teacher and senior management and shared by all school staff
- c) high expectations and suitable learning challenges
- d) deaf children have equal and first-hand access to the taught and wider curriculum of the school

- e) high expectations are set for all deaf children in relation to their academic and social and emotional development
- f) policies and practice ensure that deaf children can achieve their full potential and that their progress is regularly assessed and monitored
- g) policies and practice ensure that deaf children develop positive self-image and high self-esteem, supporting the achievement of their all-round potential
- h) policies are in place to ensure that there is early identification of barriers to learning and participation for deaf children

3.2.3 Learning, teaching and support for pupils

- a) all staff are deaf-aware and have received in-service training to raise awareness of the needs of deaf children and to provide appropriate communication skills
- b) the curriculum is differentiated appropriately to meet the needs of individual deaf children
- c) deaf children are grouped appropriate to their ability level within the classroom
- d) all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure there are good listening environments in the school and that poor acoustics in the buildings or background noise do not hinder the learning of deaf children or their full participation in the activities of the school
- e) effective use is made of hearing technologies to improve access to teaching and learning
- f) deaf children's learning needs are properly supported by qualified and trained staff, with appropriate support from qualified Teachers of the Deaf and teaching assistants
- g) deaf children have true equity of access with hearing children to the extra-curricular life of the school. This may involve alterations to special transport arrangements in order for children to take part in after-school activity and evening events

3.2.4 Working in partnership with parents

Effective home-school arrangements are in place ensuring parents of deaf children are kept informed and involved in supporting their child's learning.

3.2.5 Working in partnership with other services

Good working relationships are developed with the local specialist education services for deaf children and other specialist services such as speech and language therapy and audiology services.

3.2.6 Listening and involving deaf pupils

The school encourages deaf children to express their opinions, views and worries and fully involves them in discussions about their education.

3.2.7 Monitoring and review

Monitoring the impact of its policies and practices on deaf children in terms of:

- a) their attainment and how this compares with their hearing peers
- b) their participation in school activities
- c) their social wellbeing and the friendships they develop

4. Policy on school provision for deaf children and young people

- 4.1 All deaf children have a right to an education that makes them feel fully included in the life of the school and ensures that they make the same educational progress as their hearing peers.
- 4.2 The National Deaf Children's Society supports the view that deaf children are entitled to have their needs met in a mainstream school in their local community. National and local governments must ensure that schools should have access to expert advice and support from qualified Teachers of the Deaf from local specialist education services for deaf children to ensure that these needs are met and that deaf children make good progress.
- 4.3 However, every deaf child is different and, for some deaf children, full access to and involvement in the educational and social life of a school can be provided only in a specialist placement. This may be a specialist resource provision located at a mainstream school, a day special school or a residential special school. The National Deaf Children's Society therefore believes a continuum of provision is necessary to ensure the education service meets the needs of all deaf children. National and local governments should work together to ensure deaf children and their families have access to the full range of provision capable of meeting their broad range of needs.
- 4.4 In line with our policy of informed choice, the National Deaf Children's Society believes parents and children are best placed to judge what type of education provision meets their needs. They should be provided with impartial information about the different education options available to them, as well as the outcomes achieved by deaf children in different education settings where they live. Where appropriate, we will, through the work of its Support and Advice Services, support them in their request for a placement in a particular type of school.