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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEADING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

For further information and guidance, please see the International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down's syndrome, pages 11-18.

Leaders need to be in complete agreement with Article 24 of the UN CRPD on education and aware of their role in driving the cultural change required.

- **The law alone will not change community values, though it does provide protection and direction for those who seek to implement change. Advocacy and modelling is essential to ensure that system policies match the spirit and intent of inclusive education.**

- **Education leaders play a critical role in ensuring that the setting's culture is inclusive, and that inclusion is at the heart of everything you do.**

Leaders should provide opportunities for all staff, including learning support assistants, to undertake professional development on aspects of inclusive practice.

- **It is important that all staff are made aware of the policy of inclusion and that under the UNCRPD it is a right of every child to receive an inclusive education. This message must come from the leadership team and it must be instilled throughout the whole school.**

- **For changes to inclusive structures and the resulting practices to be sustained, changes to beliefs, attitudes and values must also occur.**

- **All staff in the setting need to be aware that students who have Down's syndrome will thrive when they are able to participate in educational and social opportunities available to other pupils within the setting.**

Leadership teams should be supported through the establishment of networks and communities of practice.

- **Consider what support you need as a leadership team to be innovative and creative in your inclusive leadership practice. For instance, consider building your own community of practice where you can share concerns and gain strategies or support.**

Leaders should establish a shared vision of inclusion across all levels of the educational system, working in partnerships with families and the broader community.

- **How is inclusion expressed within your setting's values?**
- **How is inclusion embedded within your setting's policies?**
- **How do you consider inclusion in your setting's recruitment policy and practices? How many of your staff are disabled? How do you assess whether potential staff have inclusive values and practices?**
- **How are resources allocated to prioritise inclusion within your setting? Though remember that resourcing inclusive education for learners with Down syndrome is not expensive as most adjustments can be undertaken within a regular classroom by the teaching team.**
- **How is inclusion enacted in every aspect of your setting's practices so that all learners have a positive experience of being included in the classroom and beyond?**
- **How are families and pupils involved in shaping what inclusion looks like in your setting?**

Support must be provided by the school leadership team to implement school-wide inclusive policy around learning support teams.

- **The classroom teacher has a responsibility to manage the work of their learning support staff and should coordinate the planning, working collaboratively with learning support assistants. The teacher should define the purpose of the lesson (learning intentions) and this should be clearly communicated to the learning support assistants.**
- **Teachers need to have the appropriate leadership skills to manage the collaborative work of the teaching team including LSA, other professionals (e.g. therapists, specialist support teachers) and para-professionals.**
- **Learning support assistants should be provided with opportunities to build their skills overall and for gaining skills in a particular communication system to support a student under their care, eg Makaton.**

Teachers should be responsible for the learning of all students in their classes and must guide the work of assigned teaching assistants.

- **School leaders need to ensure teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities for the education of all students within their care.**

- **Teachers should be given opportunities to plan and provide explicit guidance on the learning intentions and the role of the LSA in the lesson. The most challenging teaching should always remain the work of the teacher.**

- **Leaders should acknowledge difficulties that teachers face in teaching diverse learners and provide support to their staff. However, this support should be through the provision of assistance to ensure that all students are taught well and included in the classroom, rather than to affirm that some students are problems.**

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