

Accessibility Plan

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 This plan is to address the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to further the aims of the vision statement by 'continuing to improve all aspects of the physical environment of the Academy site and other resources so that all disabled students can take full advantage of the education and associated opportunities provided by the Academy.

1.2 DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

'A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

2. PLAN OBJECTIVE

To create an environment which enables disabled students to participate fully in the Academy community by identifying and eliminating barriers that prevent this.

3. SCOPE

The framework provides a consistent outline for all Meridian Trust Academies to follow to create their own Accessibility Plan.

4. EQUALITY ACT 2010

4.1 The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of an Academy to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a student or potential student in:

- relation to admissions
- the way it provides education for its students
- the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility or service
- excluding a student, or subjecting them to any other detriment.

4.2 The protected characteristics are:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

5.1 When performing their duties all staff and academy councillors will have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and Equality Act (2010).

5.2 Compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) is central to all Academy policies and procedures.

5.3 Every student has an entitlement to the best education they can receive regardless of any disability they might have.

5.4 Any student attending a Meridian Trust Academy will have access to all available opportunities including extra-curricular activities, events and Academy trips.

5.5 The Academy provides all students with a broad and balanced curriculum in order to meet individual learning requirements.

5.6 The Academy recognises and values parents' and carers' understanding of their child's disability and will work closely with them in order to ensure the child can have access to maximum opportunities within the Academy.

5.7 The Academy recognises parents', carers' and the child's right to confidentiality.

6. ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
1	To continue to improve the physical environment to enable better access for students with disability. Further DDA installations.	<p>Ongoing annual review of furnishings, classroom layouts and timetables to ensure full access for all. Meridian Trust (MT) submission of bids to secure DDA funding.</p> <p>Temporary ramp required if disabled students need access to the Photography darkroom.</p> <p>DT room sander: could access if lowered or could use a handheld sander. Laser cutter: if a height adjustable table was available, this would provide access. Pillar drill currently not accessible</p> <p>Catering facilities manageable, although hobs not accessible. Height adjusted needed in due course.</p> <p>PE facilities manageable.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Planned if required</p> <p>Planned if required</p> <p>Planned if required</p> <p>Annual review</p>	<p>SENDCO Estates & Facilities MT Premise Lead Site Lead MS</p> <p>Estates & Facilities MT Premise Lead Site Lead MS</p> <p>Site Lead MS DT Lead</p> <p>Site Lead MS DT Lead</p> <p>PE Team Site Lead MS</p>	<p>All students can access a full timetable and appropriate teaching spaces.</p> <p>All students can access a full timetable and appropriate teaching spaces supporting inclusion.</p> <p>All students can access a full timetable and appropriate teaching spaces supporting inclusion.</p> <p>All students can access a full timetable and appropriate teaching spaces supporting inclusion.</p> <p>All students can access a full timetable and appropriate teaching spaces supporting inclusion.</p>
2	Review, maintain and service all DDA installations.	Site checks of automated doors and ramps around site.	Regular site checks	Site team	<p>All DDA installations are working effectively and enabling access.</p> <p>Equipment certified.</p>

3	The Academy is aware of the access needs of disabled children, staff and parent/carers	<p>Each student that is physically disabled has a (PEEP) Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan that is updated yearly or if a change occurs in their condition/disability. Carers & students need to agree PEEP. This should be annually walked through.</p> <p>HR to ask staff and AC annually to ascertain access needs.</p> <p>Academy to make sure parents/carers are aware of process.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>SENDCO JSW</p> <p>HR</p> <p>SENDCo</p>	<p>All PEEPs in place for disabled students and all staff aware of all students' access needs.</p> <p>Ensure the access needs of all adults regularly on site are met.</p> <p>Ensure the access needs of all families attending site are met.</p>
4	All Academy staff are trained on access issues	<p>Provide up to date information and training on disability equality for all staff.</p> <p>All contractors conducting repairs and maintenance must abide Health and Safety.</p> <p>Annual tests for internal and external lights in place.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>SLT Lead</p> <p>Estates & Facilities MT Premise Lead Site Lead MS</p>	<p>Raised confidence of staff and AC in commitment to meet access needs.</p> <p>Ongoing improvements in access to all areas of the site.</p> <p>H&S standard met.</p>
5	Improve signage and visibility for visually impaired people around the site.	<p>Contractors maintain external lighting.</p> <p>Replace bulbs immediately when blown.</p> <p>Ensure signage is clear and appropriate</p> <p>Emergency exit signs at ceiling height, add signs in corridors at eye level.</p>	<p>Annual</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Site Lead MS</p> <p>Site Lead MS</p>	<p>Visually impaired people feel safe in the grounds.</p> <p>Access around the site easier for all.</p> <p>Visually impaired people able to evacuate safely.</p>
	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
6	Ensure all paths, ramps and communal areas are free of foliage, overgrowth and fallen leaves.	<p>Site team complete regular checks to ensure the site is free of obstructions.</p> <p>Contractors cut back hedges and trees.</p> <p>External contract in place for grounds.</p>	<p>Planned routine checks.</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>Ground's maintenance company</p> <p>Estates & Facilities MT Premise Lead Site Lead MS</p>	All members of the school community have free and easy access of all paths and communal areas.

7	Ensure that all students and visitors with a disability can be safely evacuated	<p>Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in place for all disabled students.</p> <p>Review evacuation procedures to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities.</p> <p>All Fire Marshals have up to date training.</p> <p>2 evac chairs now purchased and in place for Sci and Art, ref point 9 below.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Biannually</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>SENDCO Fire Marshals JSW Site Lead MS</p> <p>JSW</p> <p>Site Lead MS and SENDCO</p>	All disabled students and staff working with them are safe and confident in event of fire (or other situations where evacuation is deemed necessary).
8	Appropriate and sufficient parking for students and visitors with disability	Monitor car park layout is appropriate for disabled parking spaces with line marking.	Annual	Principal Site Lead MS	Sufficient parking for disability vehicles with appropriate access to all students and visitors.
9	Ensure all Fire Escape routes are suitable for all students	<p>Follow advice from HSE on accessibility of exit routes and fire doors, particularly for wheelchairs.</p> <p>PEEPS stipulate who is responsible for the evacuation of disabled students from each classroom.</p> <p>2 evac chairs are now in place for Science and Art. Annual training is now required.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>Site Lead MS</p> <p>SENDCo</p> <p>Site Lead MS</p>	<p>All staff, students and visitors (including disabled) able to have safe independent escape in emergency situations. Ongoing work improvements.</p> <p>Ensure all Academy staff are aware of their responsibilities. Students with physical disabilities can exit upper levels safely.</p>
10	Access to disabled toilets within 40 metres of any classroom	4 currently available.	Annually	Site Lead MS	Disabled toilet access available throughout Academy.
11	Ensure that the edges of all steps in the Academy are visible	Maintain visual aids on the edges of each step.	Annually	Site Lead MS	All steps are visible to all members of the Academy. Damage to be reported on Parago to allow swift attention.

ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
1	Ensure all Student Support Assistants (SSAs) have continued specific training on appropriate disability issues	All SSAs given up to date guidance and CPD needs relating to disability issues. Arrange appropriate training for SSAs.	Annually	HR SENDCo	Raised level of awareness of students with disability ensuring curriculum suits students' requirements.
2	Ensure all staff are aware of disabled students' curriculum access	All disabled students have a PEEP (to be reviewed annually). Updates for all staff on specific curriculum requirements for disabled students.	Annually	SENDCO & Site Lead MS SENDCO	All staff aware of individual student's access needs. All staff informed of requirement on a regular basis.
3	Increase confidence of teaching (and support) staff in differentiating the curriculum	Annual training on QFT and OAP to be given to all staff.	Annual	SENDCO AP T&L	Raised confidence of staff in use of QFT and OAP techniques, enabling increased student participation. Improved staff understanding of potential barriers to learning.
4	Ensure all staff are aware of and able to use relevant software and resources	Audit SEND resources and software. Run training sessions as required on the use of relevant software.	Annual	SENDCO	Wider use of SEND resources in mainstream classes and throughout the Academy.
5	Enable disabled students to have full access to extra-curricular activities and Academy trips	Advise lead staff of extracurricular activities, trips and residential visits to support access for all. Identify potential areas of difficulty and promote additional activities for disabled students. Create a log of attendance.	As per trips calendar	SENDCO Head of House SSA	All students in Academy able to access all activities, receiving full educational entitlement. Activities logged.
6	Review all curriculum areas to include disability issues	Include specific reference to disability equality in all curriculum reviews. Make all staff aware of disability equality through staff training.	Annual	HR and SLT HR	All students are aware of the challenges and equality related to disability.

7	Continue to review PE curriculum to ensure disabled students continue to have access to physical education	Ensure there is QFT PE provision within the Academy, supporting Inclusion.	Ongoing	HoD PE SENDCO	All students able to access physical activities.
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7. IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
1	Review information shared with parents and carers to ensure it is accessible	<p>Ask parents and carers about access needs when student is admitted to Academy and review via APDR.</p> <p>Ensure all letters home are accessible in line with SENDIASS guidelines.</p> <p>Produce information in a format which can be accessed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Admissions SENDCo Head of House Key Worker</p>	All parents and carers receiving Academy information in a format they can access.
2	To provide written information to students in an appropriate format.	Create an appropriate adjustment to need, passport or APDR for visually impaired students when they are admitted to the Academy, in discussion with parents, carers and families	<p>APDR reviews</p> <p>Annual reviews</p>	<p>SENDCO</p> <p>Head of House</p> <p>Teaching and support staff</p>	All students can access written information appropriately.
3	Ensure all staff are aware of guidance on accessible formats	Ensure training for all staff on accessible formats.	Annually	SENDCO	All staff aware of student, parents and carers preferred methods of communication.
4	Include discussion of access to information in all annual reviews of SEND needs	Ensure the preferred method of communication is used, where possible. Develop strategies through EHCP and APDR. Deliver strategies to all staff through training.	<p>Annual review</p> <p>APDR review cycle</p>	<p>SENDCO</p> <p>Key Workers</p> <p>All staff</p>	<p>To ensure all students can access the curriculum.</p> <p>To ensure all staff are aware of the relevant strategies and how to implement them.</p>
5	Produce accessibility information to increase support for parents and carers of disabled students.	Establish with parents and carers a SEND information point of contact through the website and SEN Information Report.	<p>Review</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>SENDCO</p> <p>SENDV</p> <p>Administrator</p>	To ensure all parents and carers are aware of how the Academy will ensure full accessibility within the Academy.

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PARENTAL GUIDANCE

9.1 Academies must not discriminate against disabled students for a reason relating to their disability. They should promote the inclusion of disabled students in their admission arrangements and in all aspects of Academy life.

Accessibility Plans and ‘Reasonable Adjustments’

Academies will vary widely in how accessible they are to individual disabled students. Parents and carers should check what improvements have been made and what is being planned when considering which Academy they would like their child to attend.

Every Academy must have an Accessibility Plan which shows how they intend to improve accessibility for disabled students. The plan must be published and you can ask to see it. It will outline how the Academy will:

- improve the physical environment
- make improvements in the provision of information
- increase access to the curriculum

Academies can also increase access for individual students by making

‘reasonable adjustments’. These can be simple changes for instance, making sure lessons are on the ground floor if one of the students uses a wheelchair and the Academy does not have a lift.

They may also be able to offer assistance during assessments or exams, so that students are assessed fairly during their course.

You should always talk to the Academy to discuss what it can reasonably do to include your child.

Improvements to the Physical Environment

Changes to the physical environment that an Academy could make to increase access might include:

- lighting and paint schemes to help visually impaired children
- lifts and ramps to help physically impaired children
- carpeting and acoustic tiling of classrooms to help hearing impaired students

Improving the Way Information is Delivered to Disabled Students

Information that is normally provided in writing (such as handouts, timetables and textbooks) can be made more accessible by providing it:

- in Braille
- in large print
- on audiotape
- using a symbol system

The school can apply to Central Beds for funding support where this may be required:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/98/school_finance/543/school_access

All applications for hearing equipment must be submitted through the Hearing Impairment Team Leader, email: hearingteam@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk for more information.

All applications for sight equipment must be submitted through the Specialist Resource Officer/Technician email: visualteam@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk for more information.

Increased Access to the Curriculum

Adjustments that would help disabled students have better access to the curriculum might include:

- changes to teaching and learning arrangements
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- support from other students

Assistive Technology

Technology suited to your child's needs can help them learn faster and more easily. This can increase their access to the curriculum. Examples of technology that can help include:

- touch-screen computers, joysticks and tracker balls
- easy-to-use keyboards
- interactive whiteboards
- text-to-speech software
- Braille-translation software
- software that connects words with pictures or symbols

Some Academies may already have this kind of technology available or may be planning to get it. Arrangements for distributing resources and funding for equipment vary throughout the UK. If your child has a statement of special educational needs (EHCP), the help on their statement must be provided. This may include special equipment.

Academy Transport

The same basic rules apply to all children. But LAs can make a decision to provide transport on a case by case basis for a disabled child. Your LA will assess your child's needs when making a decision, taking into account your child's health and/or disability and their age. If your child is offered Academy transport, the vehicle should have the relevant equipment to suit your child's needs - for example ramps or lifts. Most local councils also provide escorts on Academy transport if needed. You may be able to get help with your own costs for taking your child to Academy. Your LA will be able to tell you if this is possible. Some LAs have different transport policies concerning students going to special Academies.

If Your Child Cannot Attend School for Medical Reasons

If your child cannot attend the Academy because of health problems, your Local Authority is responsible to help them to continue their education. This could be achieved through home schooling, for example.

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