



# **Accessibility Plan**

## **2023/24**

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## Contents

AIMS .....	2
LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE .....	2
DEFINITION OF DISABILITY .....	3
REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS.....	4
KEY OBJECTIVES.....	5
MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS .....	5
LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES .....	5
CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION .....	6



## Aims

Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have an Accessibility Plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

At The Rushmere Park Academy we aim to treat all our pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind. We harness the individual talents of every person and celebrate the uniqueness of each child and aim to provide all children with access to a broad and balanced education.

This plan is available on our school website, and paper copies are available upon request.

Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.

The school supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan. The Central Bedfordshire Local Offer helps you find information about local services, support and events for children and young people aged 0 - 25 years who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Our school's complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, this procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

## Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled 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 undertake normal day to day activities.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.



The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. The overriding principle of equalities legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However the provisions in relation to disability are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person.

There are some minor differences around disability in the new Act when compared with the previous legislation.

- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The fact that it must be 'reasonable' provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be justified (bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally).
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities are under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through a statement of SEND.

As in previous legislation, a school must not discriminate against a student because of something that is a consequence of their disability. It is unlawful for a school to treat a disabled student unfavourably. Such treatment could amount to:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from a disability
- Harassment

## **Definition of Disability**

Equality Act 2010: a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment;
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial;
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

People with some visual impairment are automatically deemed to be disabled. It should be noted that this definition is not just regarding physical difficulties but also covers a wide range of:

- Sensory difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Impairment resulting from, or consisting of, a mental illness In addition there is a range of 'hidden impairments' such as
- Dyslexia



- Speech and Language Impairments
- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Impairment does not itself mean that a student is disabled but rather it is the effect on the student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in one or more of the following areas that has to be considered:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- 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

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students:

- When something we do places a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage to other students, we must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- We will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it would be reasonable to do so, and where such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage the student faces in comparison to his non-disabled peers.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The test is whether the adjustment is reasonable, and if it is then there can be no justification for why it is not made. We will not be expected to make adjustments that are not reasonable. There is as yet no clarity on what may be 'reasonable' although the Code of Practice will include factors that should be taken into account. It will be for us to decide the reasonableness of adjustments based on the individual circumstances of each case. Factors to consider may include the financial or other resources available, the effectiveness of the adjustment, its effect on other students, health and safety requirements, and whether aids have been made available through the SEND route.

The reasonable adjustments duty is intended to complement the accessibility planning duties, and the existing SEND EHCP provisions, under which Local Authorities have to provide auxiliary aids and services where a EHCP details that provision. When a disabled student does not have an EHCP

As in the previous legislation, we are not under a duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we should be planning to do so as part of our Accessibility planning.



## Key Objectives

The key objectives of our Accessibility Plan are as follows:

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for students, and prospective students, with a disability.
- We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all students, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
- We are committed to providing all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles; and we endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum Framework which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum: - setting suitable learning challenges; - responding to a student's diverse learning needs; - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

## Monitoring arrangements

This document will be reviewed every **3** years but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

It will be approved by our Trustee's & Executive Principal.

## Links with other policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SEND Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Risk assessment policy



## Contextual Information

Main building facilities:

Feature	Description	Person responsible
Specific Resources to promote the inclusion of those with disabilities	PE equipment Teaching resources Equipment to support accessibility Separate ASC provision within the school grounds	Shared Learning Trust Head of School Site Manager Health and Safety Lead
Corridor access	Wide corridors throughout the school.	
Lifts	N/A	
Parking bays	One disabled parking bays	
Entrances	Entrance to building via double doors at Reception.	
Ramps	A ramp is in use to exit and enter the school	
Toilets	Two disabled toilets	
Reception area	Entrance via double sliding doors to a spacious reception area. Split high- and low-level desk accessible to all.	
Internal signage	Appropriate signage	
Emergency escape routes	PEEPs are in place for all individuals that need support to exit the building safely.	

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