

Accessibility Policy

02/05/23

Version Control

Reviewer / owner (role)	Executive lead (role)	Approving body	Meeting date when the policy was approved
Director of Inclusion	CEO and Executive Board	EPSC	15 May 2023

This policy is reviewed every three years. The next review is due by May 2026.

Introduction

The Trust intends and expects that all decisions, policies and procedures will be underpinned at all times by its vision and values.

Our aim:

To create centres of educational excellence that inspire all pupils to turn their potential into performance.

To achieve this our schools will:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that allows pupils to develop their talents and ambitions.
- Deliver the highest quality learning opportunities facilitated by excellent teachers.
- Inspire our pupils to become confident, motivated and respectful individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society.

The Trust will support our schools by:

- Maximising the resources and expertise available to individual schools.
- Providing a platform for the sharing of excellent practice.
- Challenging and developing staff to turn their potential into performance.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on schools which makes it unlawful to discriminate against students, staff and other stakeholders with a disability. The Act brings together several different equality laws including the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). It places a duty on schools to consider what reasonable adjustments need to be made to improve access to the schools' services for any stakeholder with a disability, including students, staff, parents, and carers and any other visitors to school, without waiting until the adjustment is actually needed.

Definition of Disability

A person is disabled under the Act if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to undertake normal daily activities.

Substantial is more than minor or trivial, eg it takes much longer than it usually would, or is undertaken in a significantly different way, to complete a daily task such as getting dressed. Long-term means 12 months or more.

People with progressive conditions can be classed as disabled. A progressive condition is one that gets worse over time. However, someone automatically meets the disability definition under the Act from the day that they are diagnosed with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.

Some conditions are expressly excluded from the definition of disabled by the Act.

These are:

- addiction to, or dependency on, alcohol, nicotine, or any other substance (other than in consequence of the substance being medically prescribed)
- the condition known as seasonal allergic rhinitis (eg hay fever), except where it aggravates the effect of another condition
- tendency to set fires
- tendency to steal
- tendency to physical or sexual abuse of other persons
- exhibitionism
- voyeurism

The exclusions also apply where these tendencies arise as a consequence of, or a manifestation of, an impairment that constitutes a disability for the purposes of the Act.

The Act states that, except for the provisions in Part 12 (Transport) and section 190 (improvements to let dwelling houses), the provisions of the Act also apply in relation to a person who previously has had a disability as defined above. This means that someone who is no longer disabled, but who met the requirements of the definition in the past, will still be covered by the Act. Also protected would be someone who continues to experience debilitating effects as a result of treatment for a past disability.

This policy relates to any young person who attends one of the Trust's schools, and members of staff employed by the Trust.

Where someone meets the definition of a disabled person in the Act, the Trust will make reasonable adjustments to any elements of a job, or site, which place that person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person.

All schools in the Trust must show they are:

Identifying pupils and staff with disabilities to enable reasonable assistance to them and without discriminating against them

Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum

Improving the physical environment of schools to enable those with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided

Improving the availability of accessible information to those with disabilities

Reasonable adjustments in relation to students and parents / carers might include:

Removing movable barriers like furniture, teaching and holding meetings in a different, wheelchair accessible room

Allowing a guide or hearing dog into the school

Purchasing specialist equipment, such as an ergonomic chair

Discounting disability-related sickness leave for the purposes of absence management

Providing additional supervisory guidance / support

Allowing different start and end times to the working day for staff

From September 2012 schools have been required to provide auxiliary aids (and services) for disabled pupils to overcome any disadvantage experienced in schools.

Reasonable adjustments in relation to the school site might include:

Providing step free access to school buildings where possible

When designing new classrooms or refurbishing old buildings, ensuring that doors are wide enough for wheelchair access

Including a disabled parking space in the car park

If it is clear that the only adjustments that can be made to avoid a disadvantage are unreasonable then they do not need to be made. In such situations the school must document, in detail, how and why it has come to this conclusion.

Accessibility Plans

Every school in the Trust must have an accessibility plan and this must be published on the school's website.

The accessibility plan must include:

How the curriculum is differentiated and, at Key Stage 4, what alternative accreditation is offered

How information for pupils, parents and the community is available in different formats such as Braille, larger font or reduced / simplified language

Actions to improve the signage in the buildings and grounds where needed

Arrangements that could be put in place if a disabled parent needed support to attend a school event

Plans to make the school's site more accessible for disabled learners, their parents / carers and staff

Accessibility plans should cover a period of 3 years and then be reviewed again at the end of that period with an updated plan for the next 3 years.