



Accessibility Policy and Plan

October 2012



Accessibility Policy and Plan

Introduction

This policy and plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. The SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) amended part 4 of the DDA so that it became applicable to education and to prevent discrimination against disabled people in their access to education. This has placed three key duties on schools, which are:-

- *not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability*
- *to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage*
- *plan to increase access for disabled students*

The Policy

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

"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."

Key Objectives

To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to ensure full participation in the Academy community for students and prospective students with a disability.

To also ensure that the needs of disabled staff and parents/carers are accommodated in the school environment, as far as is reasonably practical.

The DDA specifies that an Accessibility Plan should make provision for:-

- *increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate*

in the Academy curriculum

- *improving the physical environment of the Academy to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services*
- *Improving the delivery of information to disabled students, which is provided to students who are not disabled. This should take account of views expressed by the students or parents about their preferred means of communication*

Principles

The Academy recognises its duty to:

- ensure that compliance with the DDA is consistent with the Academy's Equality Policy; its Equal Opportunities Policy; the operation of its SEN policy and any other Academy policy that has a focus and impact on it's disabled students, staff and parents/carers
- not discriminate against disabled students, staff and parents/carers in admissions and exclusions or in provision of education and associated services
- not treat disabled students, staff and parents/carers less favourably
- take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students, staff and parents/carers at a substantial disadvantage
- publish an Accessibility Plan (detailed herein as follows).

The Accessibility Plan

The plan is detailed – (see Appendix A) and summarised below

- In performing their duties, Trustees, members of the Executive Board and staff will have regard to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Code of Practice for Schools (2002);
- The Academy recognises and values parents' or carers' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects their and the child's right to confidentiality
- The Academy provides all students with a broad, balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles, promoting the development of a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to students' diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.
- Accommodating the needs of disabled staff and parents/carers as far as is reasonably practical.

Activity

This section outlines the main activities and facilities which the Academy already has in place or undertakes, or is planning to implement or undertake, in order to achieve the key objectives.

a) Education and related activities

The Academy already offers a broad and balanced curriculum with a diverse range of additional opportunities that are appropriately differentiated so as to maximise student access and to encourage wider participation. The Academy will continue to review provision and seek input from students, parents/carers, relevant specialist advisers and appropriate health professionals on a regular basis.

b) Physical environment

The Academy has in place full disabled access to all its facilities and has ensured that such access has been maintained in its recent development of additional teaching spaces. Full access is also in place to all external parts of the Academy's site. The Academy has similarly ensured that there are sufficient washroom facilities within its teaching areas designed specifically for disabled users. As has been best practice in the past, the Academy will continue to take account of the needs of its students, staff and visitors with physical difficulties and other impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes

c) Provision of information

The Academy has in place Triple-A level conformance to its web content accessibility which ensures the Web content for the Academy is more accessible to users with disabilities as well as being of benefit

to all users. The Academy will make itself aware of local services, including those available through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

Policy Review

This policy has been adopted by the Executive Board and is approved biennially by the full Executive Board unless a significant change requires agreement outside of this timescale. In the meantime it is reviewed as necessary by the owner of the policy and the head teacher, and any resultant changes other than minor clarifications or amendments will be brought to the attention of the Executive Board.

Reviewed: October 2012

Appendix A

Ashcroft Technology Academy – Accessibility Plan

1. This Accessibility Plan has been drawn up in consultation with the, students, parents, staff and approved by the Executive Board of the Academy and covers the period from October 2012 to September 2015.
2. At Ashcroft Technology Academy, 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 further committed to challenging attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
3. Ashcroft Technology Academy is extremely well provided for in terms of enabling accessibility of provision for all students, staff and visitors to the Academy, though will continually strive to ensure this is both prioritised and taken into account when considering future developments. The following areas will form the basis of the Accessibility Plan with relevant actions to:
 - Improve access to the physical environment of the school including facilities provided within the classroom;
 - Improve the delivery of written information to students, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities.
 - Incorporate reference to accessibility within curriculum planning documents and within Schemes of Work.
4. Attached are three Action Plans, relating to these three key aspects of accessibility. These plans will be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis. New Plans will be drawn up for the following three-year period, 2015 – 2018.
5. It is acknowledged that there will be need for ongoing awareness raising and training for all staff and students in the matter of disability discrimination and the potential need to inform attitudes on this matter.

6. This Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:
 - Equality & Diversity
 - Health & Safety
 - Equal Opportunities
 - Special Needs
 - Behaviour Management
 - Equal Opportunities in Employment
 - Child Protection
 - Bullying
7. The Action Plan for physical accessibility may include for works that the Academy is unable to undertake during the life of this first Accessibility Plan through funding caution and/or identification of other Academy funding priorities and as such some items may roll forward into subsequent plans. At all times where fully desired works are not achievable, the Academy will look to make reasonable adjustments short of the full works if this is deemed possible. The audit will need to be revisited prior to the end of this first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for 2015-2018.
8. As curriculum policies are reviewed, a section relating to access will be added to that on Equality and Diversity. The Academy prospectus and its website will also make reference to this Accessibility Plan.
9. The Academy will be particularly alert to any needs arising from the requirements of newly enrolled students to Year 7 and Year 12 each year as well as in-year entrants where accessibility issues may arise.
10. The Plan will be monitored through the Executive Board.