

Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company

Accessibility Statement

2017-2018

Author	Governance Manager	Intended target group	Principals, Business Managers, Chairs of Local Academy Committees
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This policy is applicable to all DBMAC academies.

Introduction

Requirement under the Equality Act 2010 for schools to have an accessibility plan

The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. There are three key duties:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage.
- To publish and implement an accessibility strategy to increase access to school education for disabled pupils.

From September 2012 the reasonable adjustments duty included a duty to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils. Where disabled pupils are placed at a substantial disadvantage, academies must consider whether any reasonable adjustments can be made to overcome that disadvantage. Many of the reasonable adjustments that schools are already making for disabled pupils include the use of some auxiliary aids, such as coloured layovers for dyslexic pupils, pen grips, adapted PE equipment, adapted keyboards and computer software. Many reasonable adjustments are inexpensive and will often involve a change in practice rather than the provision of expensive pieces of equipment or additional staff.

The reasonable adjustments duty is triggered only where there is a need to avoid 'substantial disadvantage'. Substantial is defined as being anything more than minor or

trivial. Whether or not a disabled pupil is at a substantial disadvantage or not will depend on the individual situation.

It is a statutory requirement for schools to have an Accessibility Plan which is reviewed every three years.

The Ofsted framework strengthens the requirements relating to equality of access and narrowing the gap in achievement. Local Academy Representatives should report annually on the impact of their school's arrangements for children with SEN and other vulnerabilities and progress made implementing the accessibility plan.

"Ofsted inspectors discuss with each school how it is meeting statutory requirements and evaluate and report on the impact of the school's actions. This might include a school's accessibility plan as part of the evidence." *Inspecting equalities: briefing for section 5 inspection: September 2012: No. 090197.*

The Accessibility Plan can be free standing or part of another document (eg the School Improvement Plan or within the Equality Policy) and should be available for public viewing on the Academy's website.

Definition of disability

The Act says that a pupil has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing. More guidance on the definition of disability is available from EHRC - Human rights: practical guidance

The definition can include a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or people diagnosed with cancer, HIV infection or multiple sclerosis. An impairment does not of itself mean that a pupil is disabled. It is the effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities that has to be considered.

The test of whether an impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one or more of the following:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical co-ordination;
- 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.

A child's ability to memorize, concentrate, learn, speak, move, make and maintain positive relationships, is central to their education. An impairment that has a long-term and substantial effect on a child's ability to do these things may amount to a disability.

Some disabled pupils also have special educational needs (SEN) and may be receiving support via school-based SEN provision or have a statement of SEN. Just because a disabled pupil has SEN or has a statement does not take away the duty to make reasonable adjustments for them. In practice, of course, many disabled pupils who also have a statement of SEN will receive all the support they need through the SEN framework and there will be nothing extra the school has to do. However, some disabled pupils will not have SEN, and some disabled pupils with SEN will still need reasonable adjustments to be made for them in addition to any support they receive through the SEN framework.

Health and Safety

The Equality Act 2010 does not override health and safety legislation. If making a particular adjustment would increase the risks to the health and safety of any person (including the disabled pupil in question) then this is a relevant factor in deciding whether it is reasonable to make that adjustment. However, as with the approach to any question of health and safety and risk assessment, schools are not required to eliminate all risk. Suitable and sufficient risk assessments should be used to help determine where risks are likely to arise and what action can be taken to minimise those risks. Risk assessments should be specific to the individual pupil and the activities in question. Proportionate risk management relevant to the disability should be an ongoing process throughout a disabled pupil's time at the school.

Charging arrangements for making reasonable adjustments

It is unlawful for a setting or school to charge a child for making reasonable adjustments in any circumstances, whatever the financial cost to the school and however the setting or school is funded.

2. Values

Our educative mission is to put Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church at the centre of the educational enterprise for all pupils ;their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the quality of the teaching and learning.

This Statement sets out how the Academies in the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company will develop plans to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the Academies specifically to:-

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of schools in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services;
- improve the availability of accessible information for disabled pupils and students
- This statement should inform individual Academy Access Plans developed with children and young people with disabilities and implemented by each Academy. Local Academy Committees (LAC) are free to delegate the production of the Access Plan to a Committee of the LAC, an individual Academy Representative or the Principal.

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How the plan links to other documentation and policies

This statement is linked to our Equality Information and Objectives statement, our Health and Safety Policy, our Assessment Policies, our Special Educational Needs Policies and our School Development Plans.

How the statement will be shared

Principals and Local Academy Committee Chairs will be informed of the Statement after it has received Board approval and the Statement will be published on the DBMAC website so that they can access it with ease. Templates to assist with the development of Academy Access Plans will be provided to Principals.

- *Internal and external monitoring procedures*

Individual Academy Access Plans will be developed by each Academy in accordance with their pupil profile and physical environment. Production and scrutiny of the Access Plans will be monitored by the DBMAC Audit Committee which reports to the DBMAC Board.

Planning should start with the information that is already held by the school regarding the nature of the pupil population and the school's strengths and weaknesses in ensuring access for disabled pupils. Oxfordshire's SEND Review, a self-evaluation tool for educational inclusion provides a useful starting point.

- *An **Academy Access Plan** should focus on the physical environment, curriculum, and written information*

To begin, an audit could help to identify potential barriers to access and what could be done about them.

For example:

- Are all the shelves in the library accessible to all?
- Is there adequate lighting in all areas?
- Is information provided in large print, Braille, etc.?
- Do the curriculum and resources include examples of people with disabilities?

The Plan should include information on

- Short, medium and long term Targets
- The strategies that will be employed to meet these targets
- Timescales
- Who is responsible for particular targets/strategies
- Costed resource implications and identity of source of funds
- Systems of evaluation and monitoring
- Training needs (related to targets)
- Success criteria

Definition of basic accessibility

The minimum requirements for accessible provision in all schools are set out by Oxfordshire County Council; the general principles for this are:

- circulation routes as a basic requirement for accessibility;
- sufficient accessible toilet provision to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities with a minimum of one centrally situated accessible toilet and changing provision
- access to specialist areas: PE (sports hall), science laboratory, D&T, ICT and any other unique specialist facility provided at that school;
- access to general classrooms to be sufficient to timetable the curriculum. This may mean considering the management of space rather than adapting space to fit in with previously established practice, for example, using general teaching space for different subjects from one academic year to the next or for pupils in a different year group to fit in with the requirements of the individual with the disability;
- access to a quiet area or small group room;
- access to recreation areas, sports fields and social spaces;
- access to extended school facilities.

Academies will continue to be responsible for any adaptations required to comply with requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for the community hire of their premises. As a minimum, the adaptations should meet the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations and the British Standard 'code of practice' BS8300.

Academies should complete an annual self-audit questionnaire designed to assess the current accessibility of their premises.

Improving physical accessibility for specific needs:-

(a) Children and young people with hearing impairment

The improvement of the acoustic environment for children and young people with hearing impairment has benefits for all children and young people using the learning environment. Where resources permit, physical adaptations will be made to provide a quiet room for individual support work for children and young people with a significant hearing impairment. Similarly adaptations to improve acoustics in the child's classroom(s) and main assembly hall in primary settings will be put in place where reasonable and practical. Improving access to key curriculum areas at secondary phase and the main assembly hall will be a priority for secondary settings. Use will be made of the BB93 guidance in determining acceptable levels of ambient noise and reverberation times. Adaptations may include lowering of ceilings, use of wall panelling, provision of carpets and/or curtains, installation of a sound field system and provision of an FM system. Classrooms and teaching areas should have good acoustics and meet the BB93 regulations for classrooms used by hearing impaired children and young people.

(b) Children and young people with visual Impairment

Where an environmental audit is needed to assess the physical accessibility of a school setting for a visually impaired child or young person this could be carried out by a

Rehabilitation Officer from the Sensory Impairment Team at Oxfordshire County Council. Recommendations are usually very specific to the individual child and setting and may, for example, include the painting of yellow lines to highlight trip hazards such as sloping edges, nosings on steps and bollards, changes to lighting, adaptations to windows to prevent them opening dangerously on to a visually impaired child, the addition of handrails or trails and Braille signage. The setting is responsible for making these adaptations unless major building work is required.

(c) Children and young people with physical disability

Physical adaptations are often specific to the needs of the individual child and are usually recommended following an assessment by an occupational therapist in consultation with a SENSS specialist advisory teacher. Adaptations may include installation of a lift, accessible doors, disabled toilet facilities including fixed hoists and changing beds and fire safety equipment. Adjustments may also be needed to a pupil's timetabling and room allocation so that access to a physically accessible room is available across the range of curriculum subjects.

Standards for new accommodation now reflect the needs of those with physical disability and sensory disability.

(d) Children and young people with communication and interaction needs and those who need personalised learning approaches, including those with attention difficulties.

A variety of physical adaptations may be needed to facilitate full access to curriculum and learning opportunities, and to the social aspects of school life. Adaptations will vary and will need to be individualised to meet the particular difficulties of each child or young person. Children with autistic spectrum disorder have difficulty interpreting their surroundings and communicating and interacting with others. They need access to calm, distraction free learning environment, which is predictable and easily understood, as the reduction in sensory stimulus helps to reduce anxiety and distress, (this will not always be possible for all lessons, but a quiet place could be made available as needed).

Children and young people who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive or disturbing others may need extra space/opportunities to move around and to ensure a comfortable distance between themselves and others. Some may take extreme risks or have outbursts and need a safe place to calm down.

Environmental adaptations may include provision of an accessible, alternative teaching and learning space within the school to which children and young people can be withdrawn, or can withdraw themselves, should the classroom environment become overwhelming or present sensory challenges.

Presentation of school related information in a coherent visual format to support comprehension and retention of information can also help, for example, colour coding the doors of subject teaching rooms in line with exercise books and timetables.

Planning for new accommodation and adaptations need to consider sensory sensitivity, space for personalised learning approaches, and calm supportive environments.

(e) Improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils who require support accessing written information.

Large print

Written material should be produced in a minimum of 12 point and printed in a plain font. However, for some visually impaired pupils, this may not be sufficient.

Easy Read

This format was originally developed for people with learning disabilities, but now has a wider user group. It uses large print with illustrations and can be supported by audio. The language is reduced in complexity and jargon.

Braille and other Alternative Formats

SENSS will work in partnership with schools and other agencies to provide access for children with specific impairments or disabilities to a range of human, paper and electronic sources of information, including:

- Provision of specialist access equipment for pupils with severe communication difficulties including members of the Deaf community. This will include: Text phones, and video telephone systems.

Certain information in video format requiring both subtitles and British Sign Language (BSL) sign interpreting services as well as live voice.

Certain information access requiring the provision of BSL interpreting services across a number of levels for a range of information contact points.

- Access to provision via specialist access equipment for pupils with severe visual impairments e.g. Braille facilities, signage, talking/text reading facilities. In addition, certain information access will require the provision of audio tapes services across a number of levels for a range of information contact points; e.g. the circulation of public information.
- Access for pupils with severe sensory impairments to information via electronic media; internet/websites. This will include sign language translation/subtitles, large print and talking print versions.
- Access for pupils with severe sensory impairments to paper based published information e.g. large print and Braille, audiotapes video interpreting facilities.
- Access to information for disabled children when English is not their first language via translations into their preferred format.
- In addition there are a small number of children who will have both sensory impairments and

English as an additional language. This group will require additional and specialist facilities and services which reflect a combination of the above strategies.

- *Complaints procedures*

Complaints should be directed to the Chair of the DBMAC Board through the Governance Manager at St Gregory the Great Catholic School, Cricket Road, Oxford OX4 3DR

Approved by Chair of DBMAC Board :D Forster...(original signed).....

Date: ...26.04.2017.....

