

Accessibility Plan

Last updated: September 2020

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act – DDA, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, requires all Schools, academies and LAs to plan to increase, over time, accessibility for disabled pupils. Academies are required to produce plans for their individual establishment and LAs are required to prepare accessibility strategies covering the maintained schools in their areas. Delta academies are required to plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled pupils to the curriculum
- Improving access to the Academy's physical environment (buildings and grounds)
- Improving written information for disabled pupils

At a legislative level there are three main strands for disabled pupils:

- The SEN Framework (the Education Act 1996 and the SEN and Disability Act 2001)
- The Disability Discrimination Duties (Sections 28A-28C of the DDA 1995)
- The planning duties (Section 28D-28E of the DDA 1995)

The Education Act 1996 states that 'children have a special educational need if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them'. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- Have a disability which prevents, or hinders, them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LA
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the above definitions, or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

Starting points

The purpose and Direction of the Academy's scheme

The Vale Academy endorses an accessibility strategy that aims to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the academy curriculum. The following plan outlines what measures the academy is taking to improve access for all pupils.

Involvement of disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school

For pupils with a Statement of SEN, the views and aspirations of disabled pupils will be formally gathered annually through an annual review process. This will seek to establish what is going well and also any concerns or barriers to progress from the pupil's point of view. Their parents also have the opportunity to express their views either in writing or simply verbally at the review meeting.

This includes the opportunity to express any concerns or queries they may have regarding their child's progress and the provision in place for them.

Areas for development:

- Questionnaire / audit issued to appropriate parents and analysis of results
- Amendments of the Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan as a result of information gathered.

Information gathering

Within the current academy population there are:

- 24 pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan
- 117 pupils on the SEN Register in total

Disabled pupils currently in the academy have the following needs:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD - including Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Development Disorder)
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Diabetes
- Behavioural, Emotional, (and Social) Difficulties (BESD)
- Epilepsy
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Visual Impairment (VI)
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD – including Dyslexia and Dyspraxia)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Definition

Pupils falling within the definition of disabled will have a wide range of needs and requirements including: mobility impairment, sensory impairment, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, asthma and progressive/degenerative conditions.

The academy will not automatically consider pupils with a disability to have special educational needs, as can be seen below.

The DDA definition states that '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'.

Definition of disability

The Equality Act duties are there to ensure all pupils who are defined by the Equality Act as being disabled have improved access to all aspects of schools and that the academy has a duty to plan, wherever it is reasonable, to better access for disabled pupils.

- The Equality Act defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (see definition below of normal day-to-day activities).
- Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments.
- In the Equality Act 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. 'Long-term' means has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.

The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning difficulties, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, where the effect of the impairment on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is adverse, substantial and long-term. All those with cancer or surviving cancer; HIV or Multiple Sclerosis are now included from the point of diagnosis.

Related academy policies

- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- Anti- Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- First Aid Policy

The first four documents describe the academy's policy for promoting equal opportunities for disabled pupils and pupils with SEN; the fourth policy includes provision for pupils with medical needs.

Normal day-to-day activity

The test of whether the impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects the pupil in everyday life in one or more of the following ways:

- 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.

Impact assessment

For the purpose of the DDA 1995 schools, academies and LAs are required to consider the needs of pupils in relation to physical adaptations, curriculum access and auxiliary aids and services.

Please note that these duties are all 'anticipatory'; the Academy will consider the requirements of current and future disabled pupils. This means that the Academy is expecting to make reasonable enquiries to find out whether children currently on roll, as well as those seeking admission, have a disability.

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the Academy.

In deciding whether a step is reasonable, the Academy may take into account the need to maintain:

1. Academic standards
2. Available resources
3. The practicalities of making a particular adjustment
4. The health and safety of the disabled pupils and others and the interests of others

The academy embraces the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act and the requirement to implement a Disability Equality Scheme. The academy does all that is reasonably practicable to meet the

needs of the disabled pupils, staff or visitors. The Associate Vice Principal and SENCO will work closely with the relevant advisory bodies in order to provide the most appropriate support to pupils with disabilities. This process invariably involves working closely with the pupil and the pupil's family.

Every effort is made to integrate disabled persons into the mainstream activities of the academy. The Associate Vice Principal will continue to monitor the effectiveness of strategies put in place to accommodate persons with disabilities and instigates appropriate action to ensure appropriate physical accommodations are made and that, where necessary procedural and timetabling changes are made.

Contents of the Accessibility Plan

In this Accessibility Plan any reference to The Vale Academy, or the academy, refers to the whole school.

With regards to the legislation and related guidance, the Academy aims to improve accessibility by:

- Increasing access for disabled pupils to the curriculum
- Improving access to the Academy's physical environment
- Improving written information for disabled pupils

The following plan outlines the academy's policies in relation to Access and Disability.

Access to the curriculum

When a pupil with a disability is admitted to the Academy then we will make reasonable adjustments to enable the pupil to access the curriculum by:

- Ensuring that all staff receive the necessary training to be able to teach and support the pupil.
- Endeavouring to organise teaching in accessible classrooms. All classrooms are accessible to wheelchair users.
- Differentiating work so that it is accessible to disabled pupils.
- Modifying the curriculum as applicable.
- Making appropriate adjustments to time allowed and expected outcomes of work to be completed by disabled pupils.
- Allowing pupils alternative methods of recording work, where it is affordable by the academy.
- Including pupils on academy visits provided that, following a risk assessment to the health and safety needs of the pupils, and others on the trip, it is safe to do so. Additional resources needed on health and safety grounds will be charged for.
- Encouraging disabled pupils to take a full part in the curriculum including extracurricular activities.
- Putting a risk assessment in place to support the pupil and the appropriate adjustments needed for example leaving lessons early to avoid large crowds and lesson change over
- Introducing a buddy system for disabled pupils to support access in and around the academy

Accessibility audit and Planning

An audit of the academy site was carried out September 2020

The next review is September 2023

The survey of the site evidences areas that have been improved to make the academy more accessible and also recognised areas which still needed to be improved.

Areas to be improved

1. Arrangements for Disabled Parking – Procedures need putting in place to ensure only registered Blue Badge holders use the facility.
2. Access to assemblies for students with hearing impairment.

Areas to be considered in the future

1. Internal Signage – braille or large print for VI students and visitors.

Making it Happen

The Academy is fully committed to work with stakeholders to ensure the policy has will ensure that policy has a positive impact on pupils who may be classified as disabled. The following actions will be implemented:

- Clear allocation of lead responsibility
- Clear allocation of recourses
- An indication of expected outcomes for performance criteria
- Clear timescales
- A specified date to process for review

Commitment to review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed every three years by the relevant Policy Owner named below and evaluated and approved by the EAB on a three year cycle, and/or in the light of changes in National Curriculum requirements and DfE guidance/regulations.

Named Responsibility of Policy: Graham West (Associate Vice Principal)

Date of Policy: Sept 2020

Date of next Review: Sept 2023

AAB Accountability: Pat Kemshell (Chairperson)