

THE DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD ACADEMIES TRUST

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN 22 - 26



THE
DIOCESE OF
SHEFFIELD
ACADEMIES
TRUST

Approved by: DSAT Trust Board

Last reviewed on: November 2022

Next review due by: November 2026

1. Introduction

This Accessibility Policy and Plan is following current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010.

According to the Act, a “disabled person is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

We are committed to providing accessible environments which values and includes all pupils, 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.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- Increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding and making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of each school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.
- Improve access to the **physical environment** of each school, adding specialist facilities where necessary. This covers reasonable adjustments to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to enable pupils with disabilities to take advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- Improve and make reasonable adjustments to the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.
- The Trust also recognises its responsibilities towards **employees with disabilities** and will:
 - Have recruitment procedures in place to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities and make reasonable adjustment to support disabled candidates.
 - Provide appropriate support and provision for employees with disabilities to ensure that they can carry out their work effectively without barriers.

- Make reasonable adjustments to enable staff to access the workplace
- Ensure that employees have access to clear communication, structure and an enhanced working environment in which people can work in ways that suit them.

3. Accessibility Audits and Action Plans

Accessibility Audits in the new format will be carried out at each school by the end of the 2023 Spring term.

The accessibility audit will cover the following areas:

- **Access to the curriculum** – by assessing the extent to which pupils with disabilities can access the curriculum on an equal basis with their peers.
- **Access to the physical environment** – by assessing the extent to which pupils with disabilities can access the physical environment on an equal basis with their peers.
- **Access to information** – by assessing the extent to which pupils with disabilities can access information on an equal basis with their peers.

When conducting the audit, consideration will be given to all kinds of disabilities and impairments, including but not limited to the following:

- **Ambulatory disabilities** – this includes pupils who use a wheelchair or mobility aid.
- **Auditory disabilities** – this includes those with hearing impairments and sensitivities.
- **Comprehension** – this includes neurodiverse individuals such as those with autism and dyslexia (see Appendix A).
- **Dexterity disabilities** – this includes those whose everyday manual handling of objects and fixtures may be impaired.
- **Visual disabilities** – this includes those with visual impairments and sensitivities.

The accessibility Action Plan

The findings from the audit will be used to formulate an action plan which will identify short, medium and long-term actions to address specific gaps and improve access.

All actions will be carried out within a reasonable timeframe, and after taking into account pupils' disabilities and the preferences of their parents/guardians.

It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this action plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans.

This plan will be reviewed every three years to take into account the changing needs of each school and its pupils. The plan will also be reviewed where the school has undergone a refurbishment.

This document will be available on site with the school specific accessibility audit and action plan.

Appendix A

DSAT Neurodiversity Statement

At our Trust, we embrace and celebrate neurodiversity. We recognise that every pupil has unique strengths, abilities, and needs, and we are committed to creating a learning environment that supports the diverse needs of all our pupils.

We believe that neurodiversity is a natural and valuable part of human diversity, and that individuals with neurological differences such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other conditions have much to contribute to our school community and society as a whole.

We strive to create a culture of acceptance, understanding, and support for all pupils, including those with neurological differences. We prioritise creating a learning environment that is accessible, inclusive, and empowering for every pupil.

We believe that neurodivergent pupils have the right to be treated with respect, dignity, and equity. We work to eliminate stigmatisation and discrimination, and we seek to promote understanding and acceptance of neurodiversity within our school community and beyond.

In all our policies and practices, we aim to promote neurodiversity inclusion and to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We are committed to ongoing education and training for our staff, pupils, and families to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of neurodiversity.