Altus Education Partnership

Accessibility Plan

Approval Body	Trust Senior Leadership Team
Date of Approval	15/6/21

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1   Background

1.1   On 1 October 2012, The Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on educational establishments.

1.2   The Act makes it unlawful for Altus Education Partnership, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a student or potential student in relation to: -
- admissions.
- the way we provide education for students.
- the way we provide students access to any benefit, facility, or service.
- subjecting them to any other detriment.

1.3   The protected characteristics are: -
- sex.
- race.
- disability.
- religion or belief.
- sexual orientation.
- gender reassignment.
- pregnancy or maternity.

1.4   There is still a requirement to have a Trust Accessibility Plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled students to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information in all our academies.

1.5   The Equality Act applies to all schools and colleges in England and Wales. (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, Paragraph 3, and Disability Discrimination regulations 2005) Furthermore, we are required to draw up equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Accessibility Plan is reviewed every three years.

1.6   Each academy within the Trust will have their own specific Accessibility Plan which will relate to their own context.

2   Disability Discrimination Act

2.1   The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows: -
- the definition of disability is less restrictive.
- direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified.
- failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified.
- from September 2012, we are under a duty to make available auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments, where these are not being supplied through a Statement of Special Educational Needs or from other sources.

3   Definition of Disability

3.1   The Act defines disability as when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

3.2   Some specific conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV are considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.

3.3 Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least twelve months.

4 Reasonable Adjustments

4.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a Trust places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students. However, where we must do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

4.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled student, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces compared to other non-disabled students.

4.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (i.e., via a Statement/EHC Plan) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken based on the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.

4.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software.

4.5 Our SEND and Local Offer policy within each academy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our Trust. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our academies, given the circumstances of each individual case.

4.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our academies to make such provision, e.g., hearing aids.

4.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled students will involve little or no cost or disruption and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three-year Accessibility Plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.

4.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled students play as full a part as possible in school life and our Accessibility Plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other students, we would not consider it to be reasonable. For example, if a geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled student could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other students.

5 Our Vision

5.1 We believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy, safe, and successful, valued, and respected, and to have high aspirations for their future.

5.2 Inclusion is the process of taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy school life.

6 Our Duty around Accessibility for Disabled Students

6.1 Our Accessibility Plan is outlined below.

6.2 Our Accessibility Plan focuses on the following areas for implementation: -
- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum.
- improving the physical environment to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities, and services provided.
- improving the availability of accessible information to a disabled student.

6.3 Our approach includes the following areas:

- Physical facilities – addressing any alterations that may be required to the structure of Trust buildings or sites to secure access for students, staff, parents, and visitors.
- Curriculum – including our provision for teaching and learning, the wider curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and school visits.
- Support Services – access to services within and external to each academy to support families where disability is identified.

Accessibility Plan - Altus Education Partnership August 2021 – July 2024

At Altus Education Partnership, we are committed to providing a fully accessible environment, which values and includes all students, staff, parents, and visitors regardless of their educational, 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.

Altus Education Partnership will continue to increase the accessibility of provision for all students, staff, and visitors to their establishments. Each academy will have their own plan in place which will be specific to their context.

The Accessibility Plan contains relevant actions to:

➤ Improve access to the physical environment of academies within the Trust, adding specialist facilities, as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of each academy and physical aids to access education.
➤ Increase access to the curriculum for students with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that students with a disability are as equally, prepared for life as others. This covers teaching, learning and the wider curriculum of each establishment. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist students in accessing the curriculum.
➤ Improve the delivery of written information to students, staff, parents, and visitors with disabilities.

Aim	Current Good Practice	Person Responsible
Access to Site and Facilities		
Access via Public Transport	• Each academy's website will display links to google maps, enabling all to easily find location of sites.	Trust Marketing Team
Disabled Parking	• Signs will direct drivers to disabled bays. Where possible larger bays will be in place for disabled individuals. • Appropriate signage will be displayed on all sites within the Trust. • Drop off carparking spaces are provided where possible.	Trust Operations Manager/Site Team for each academy.
Access to Reception	• Ramps will be provided in appropriate areas of each site. • Markings will display pedestrian crossings. • Reception intercoms will be at regulated height for disabled personnel. • External inspections will take place ensuring any trip hazards are removed, including wet leaves.	

Reception Facilities	- Appropriate seating in place. - Disabled toilets for both students and visitors. - Internal floor markings to support students and visitors with visual impairment. - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in place where required and all fire evacuation teams for each site notified of these. - Induction loop fitted where possible in all reception areas.	Trust Operations Manager/Site Team for each academy.
Accessible Toilets	- Cleaning staff for each site will ensure that alarm cords are left to hand freely. - All toilets fitted with coat hooks at an accessible height. - Appropriate signage in place within reception areas.	
Internal Areas	- Corridors and doors meet disabled regulations. - Height of shelving is sufficient ensuring access to resources. - Wheelchair access to all areas of the site, ensuring automatic doors in place where possible, handles fitted at appropriate height, corridor width appropriate for wheelchair access, sufficient signage, and lighting in place.	
External Areas	Outside areas are flat and accessible to wheelchair users as much as possible.	
Internal and External Signage	Internal and external signs will incorporate braille where possible.	
Doors	Door handles will be at the appropriate height in all areas of each building.	
Furniture and Teaching Equipment	- All teaching areas will have sufficient space for wheelchair access. - Appropriate equipment will be in place for disabled user. - Future work at each site will ensure accessibility requirements are considered.	
Support Services		
Staffing and Delivery	- Subscription to a wide range of external provision to improve self-reliance and confidence for selected vulnerable students. - External educational professionals have completed sessions to assess student abilities.	Senior Leadership Team at each academy.

	• Communication with appropriate external agencies to provide helpful advice and strategies for students with SEND and learning/significant impairments. • Specialist staff in place to ensure the co-ordination and delivery of intervention and to support the smooth running of SEND administration.	
Communication	• Where possible produce all school communication documents in the appropriate font, size, colour to assist visually impaired students. • Communicate in appropriate ways to SEND parents/carers.	Trust Marketing Team
Reviews	• Conduct annual reviews of incidents regarding site improvements, incidents and near misses, and essential maintenance works. • Ensure all areas have a full and in date Risk Assessment. • Ensure PEEPS are in place to ensure staff, students and visitors can safely evacuate in the case of an emergency. • Ensure appropriate first aid arrangements are on each site.	Trust Operations Manager/Site Team
Curriculum		
Information Technology	• Appropriate IT is in place to enhance the learning process, and to assist identified students with any difficulties.	Senior Leadership Team/IT Team
Specialist Equipment	• Specialist equipment in place where needed.	Senior Leadership Team/IT Team/SEND Team
Subject Offering	• Subject based intervention provided by subject specialise staff. Inclusion area in place where needed. • Regular review of curriculum offering considering national and location policy. • Curriculum resources include examples of people with disabilities. • Taking full advantage of the opportunities available outside school to provide educational visits that are accessible to all students.	Senior Leadership Team at each academy
Curriculum Tracking	• Curriculum progress is tracked for all students, including those with a disability. • Targets are set effectively and are appropriate for students with additional needs. • Work with examination boards to ensure appropriate exam access arrangements are followed. • Using ability groups to target additional needs, with skilled staff to support learning.	Senior Leadership Team at each academy