



DISABILITY STATEMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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1.0 Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation and provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone with a disability bringing together the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.

There are some minor differences around disability in the new Act when compared with previous legislation:

- The Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must be unable to carry out to meet the definition
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The fact that it must be 'reasonable' provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be justified (bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally).
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities were under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through an EHCP.

As in previous legislation a school must not discriminate against a student because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school to treat a disabled student unfavourably. Such treatment could amount to:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from a disability
- Harassment

Direct discrimination can never be justified but a school could justify indirect discrimination against a disabled student, and discrimination arising from a disability if the discrimination is the result of action that is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

The Governing Body of Southend High School for Boys is committed to a fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of disability and, on a continuous basis, will work towards improving access to the physical environment, to the curriculum and to the provision of information in order to work towards access for all.

2.0 Definition of Disability

In relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommended that all students with SEN and those with long-term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the DDA and for equality. This is in addition to all students with long-term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities. It is understood that the definition of disability under the Act is different from the eligibility for special educational needs provision. This means that disabled students may or may not have special educational needs. The school recognises that social, educational and behavioural difficulties are part of this definition.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a person who 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".

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial;
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

2.1 Progressive conditions

Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect, and are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis.

2.1 Conditions specifically excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

It should be noted that this definition is not just regarding physical difficulties but also covers a wide range of:

- Sensory difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Impairment resulting from, or consisting of, a mental illness

In addition, there is a range of 'hidden impairments' such as

- Dyslexia
- Speech and Language Impairments
- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Impairment does not itself mean that a student is disabled but rather it is the effect on the student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in one or more of the following areas that has to be considered:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- 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

3.0 Aims

Schools are required to have an Accessibility Plan detailing how they will improve access to the physical environment, increase access to the curriculum for disabled students, and how they will improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students, staff and stakeholders. Our vision is to be inclusive, to be a school where every student is valued, challenged and nurtured in order to realise potential, and that mutual respect and understanding creates a vibrant learning community.

Compliance with the disability duty under the Equality Act is consistent with the school's aims and the operation of the school's SEND policy.

Southend High School for Boys will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of disabled people with any form of impairment and will also consider students who are carers of disabled parents. The school is committed to ensuring equal treatment and opportunities for all members of the school community and our Accessibility Plan outlines our intention to remove barriers for disabled students, staff and stakeholders and to:

- increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the different areas of the national curriculum, increase access to extra-curricular activities and the wider school curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

Furthermore, under our equality duties, we intend to improve the physical environment of the school to enable any disabled person (student, parent/carer, employees or visitor) to access facilities and services and improve the availability of accessible information to any disabled person. The Governing Body recognises the limitations to the speed of improvements resulting from the practicalities of the current site and buildings, the availability of finance and the duties to all members of the school community.

This Accessibility Plan will begin the process of addressing the needs of disabled people through specific targets. It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equality Policy (including Equalities Information and Objectives)
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Race Equality Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Code of Conduct
- School Improvement Plan
- Special Educational Needs Policy (SEN)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- ICT user policy
- Admissions Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Recruitment Policy

4.0 Reasonable Adjustments

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students and staff:

- when something we do places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage to others; and
- we will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled person when it would be reasonable to do so, and where an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage the person faces in comparison to their non-disabled peers.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The test is whether the adjustment is reasonable, and if it is then there can be no justification for why it is not made. We will not be expected to make adjustments that are not reasonable. It is up to the school to decide the reasonableness of adjustments based on individual circumstances of each case. Factors considered may include financial or other resources available, the effectiveness of the adjustment, its effect on others, health and safety requirements, and specifically for students, if aids have been made available through the SEND route.

The reasonable adjustments duty is intended to complement the accessibility planning duties, and the existing EHCP provision. When a disabled student does not have an EHCP (or the EHCP does not provide the necessary aid), then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will need to be facilitated by the school.

As in previous legislation, the school is not under any duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we will plan to do so as part of our Accessibility planning.

5.0 The School's Strategic Priorities

The whole school priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan will incorporate the needs of all members of the school.

Our Accessibility Plan outlines our intention to remove barriers for disabled employees and staff through specified targets and to:

- improve access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school 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 those able-bodied. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the 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 students in accessing the curriculum.
- Where a current student develops a disability, either a temporary disability such as a broken leg, or a permanent disability, every effort will be made to put in place adjustments and accommodations, as far as reasonably practical, to allow the student to access their normal curriculum. Risk assessments will be carried out to provide for this.
- improve the delivery and availability of accessible information to disabled students, staff, parents and visitors. Examples include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. Information will be made available in various formats on request within a reasonable time frame.

In addition, the school SENDCO will:

- arrange appropriate training for staff as required in order to better understand the needs of students with a range of disabilities;
- be responsible for the dissemination of this knowledge to all staff;
- identify how classroom support arrangements, such as the deployment of support assistants, provision of ICT etc. contribute to, and enhance learning opportunities;
- consider how liaison, communication and relationships with external agencies could support and enhance student access to the curriculum;
- enhance the positive culture and ethos of the school by undertaking intervention to improve the schools ability to include those with disabilities.

6.0 Involvement of disabled people in developing a Disability Equality Scheme

It is the intention to consult with all stakeholders (students, parents/carers, regular visitors to the school) with disabilities to aid in the development of this plan by taking account of their views when making appropriate reasonable adjustments. This consultation process will be on-going.

In addition, as part of our public sector equality duty, we intend to consult with external voluntary organisations in order to further inform the Action points in our Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Plan will be available to all stakeholders and the progress made will be reported annually.

Appendix 1

Southend High School for Boys Accessibility Plan 2019-2022

Improving the Physical Access to the School

S/M/L Term	Objectives	Area for Action	Resources Required	Timeframe	Responsibility	Monitoring
S	Continuing audit of access to and circulation within buildings, classrooms and corridors, and consideration of disabled access when reviewing capital projects	Establish list of priorities for areas where improvements can be made (advice to be sought from students, parents, staff, other stakeholders and appropriate external agencies)	Time Costs allocated as part of capital projects	Ongoing	Director of Resources/ SENDCo	Senior Leadership Team
L	Movement/transfers between levels (2024 – ramp access added to all ground floor areas. 2022 – lift access added to East End, 1 st Floor)	Currently problematic in various parts of site – but access to be considered when any development works are undertaken	In short term timetabling/rooming to be considered in individual cases Costs allocated as part of capital projects	Ongoing	Timetabler to timetable individual cases Director of Resources	Senior Leadership Team
S	Ensure fire procedures take account of students and staff with disabilities, and control of disabled visitors	Review number, capability and location of evacuation chairs for use in emergency and ensure staff are aware.	Consider purchase of another evacuation chair	Ongoing	Director of Resources/Office Manager/SENDCO	Senior Leadership Team
M	Ensure the school is prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities and they have equal access to curriculum opportunities (ARB, first cohort September 2023)	Consultation with parents and external agencies as appropriate Personalised curriculum through ARB or organised by Head of Year	Time & consultation replies co-ordinated. Staffing requirements assessed	Termly	Deputy Headteacher/ SENDCO/ Directors of Key Stages	Senior Leadership Team

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Improving the Curriculum Access

S/M/L Term	Objectives	Area for Action	Resources Required	Timeframe	Responsibility	Monitoring
S	Ensure appropriate IT facilities are available for students with disabilities (2023 Ipads & Laptops purchased for ARB/SEND)	Review accessibility of IT and include students in review as appropriate	Time & consultation replies co-ordinated	Ongoing	Directors of Key Stage/ SENDCo	Senior Leadership Team
S	Ensure staff have appropriate range of skills and experience to be able to assess and provide for the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties (2023 – Appointed specialist Autism Teacher 2025 – Projected LSA support – 300hours per week)	Determine training needs Consider employment of specialist support assistants with relevant skills and expertise	Time Costs to be considered when setting budgets	Ongoing	SENDCo/ Deputy Headteacher	Senior Leadership Team
S	Ensure all out of school activities are planned to allow participation of all students	Ensure trip approval documentation and risk assessments consider access for individuals with disabilities	Time Determine if documentation is sufficient to cover needs	Ongoing	Director of Resources/ Deputy Headteacher/ SENDCo	Senior Leadership Team
S	Ensure all students with medical needs have an Individual Health Care Plan. Record in SIMS to ensure appropriate accommodations can be made by staff for students on a day to day basis	All necessary IHPs in place and agreed with parents/carers Personalised learning plans can be put in place where medical need disrupts learning	Time	Ongoing	Office Manager/Deputy Headteacher (DSL)/SENDCO	Senior Leadership Team

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Improving Access to Information

S/M/L Term	Objectives	Area for Action	Resources Required	Timeframe	Responsibility	Monitoring
S	Further availability of written material in alternative formats, plus accessibility to student information in online systems at any time	<p>Consider alternative formats (such as large print and audio/digital formats) etc. as required for parents and students.</p> <p>Continue to work to improve level of take-up by parents/carers of registration for "Go4Schools" and "Wise Pay" systems to allow student reports and information to be provided online enabling access at any time and to provide larger print formats to be accessed)</p> <p>(N.B. printed reports sent out to any parent indicating they have no access to the internet)</p>	Administration time and resources to contact parents/carers to register for online reporting systems and to provide feedback on information formats	Ongoing	Data team/ Pastoral teams/ Office Manager	Senior Leadership Team
M	Further training for raising awareness of disability issues and impact of potential new EHCP legislation	Provide targeted training for governors, staff & students in supporting and accessing support and recognising need.	Time	Ongoing - issues considered/monitored at staff training & governor meetings	Deputy Headteacher/ SENDCo/ Office Manager	Senior Leadership Team