
Accessibility Policy and Plan



Responsible Person: Principal
Approved by: Finance and Resources Committee

Date of Last Approval 31/10/23
Next Review Date: 31/10/2026 (3 yearly)
Policy Applicable to: The Deaf Academy
Version 2: Added action plan and details of learning/accessibility walks

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1. Aims

Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

Our Academy aims to treat all its students fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all students without discrimination of any kind.

The development of effective learning is the main priority of the Deaf Academy. Our aim is to provide all students with a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum within a safe, secure and supportive environment that fosters self-esteem, equips students to meet the challenge of further education, independent living or employment, instils a sense of good citizenship, and provides a framework for lifelong learning.

All students at the Deaf Academy have a learning difficulty or disability, a physical or sensory impairment or disability, or any combination of cognitive, physical, emotional, sensory or health factors that affect their access to learning.

The Academy aims to identify and remove barriers for disabled students in every area of Academy life. We try to achieve this by

- setting suitable learning challenges

- responding to students' diverse needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment

The Academy aspires for all students to participate fully in all aspects of Academy life. These include sporting activities, art, music, dance and other creative work, educational visits including residential journeys and progression to a broad range of accreditation pathways. The Deaf Academy has an inclusive ethos and welcomes all children, young people and other visitors to the Academy regardless of impairment, gender or ethnicity. The Academy is built on several levels and generally has reasonably good physical access, in terms of its buildings. However, the Academy continually seeks to improve provision, the learning environment, access to the Academy site and all its amenities, as well as to improve the ways in which we provide information to parents and the wider Academy community.

The plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request.

Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.

The school supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan.

Our school's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, this procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

The views of a number of stakeholders will contribute to further reviews of this Accessibility Plan. We are aware of the need to expand this aspect of our work to the wider community of students, their families and other regular visitors to the Academy.

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements of [schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010](#) and the Department for Education (DfE) [guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010](#).

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day to day activities.

Under the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#), 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled student faces in comparison with non-disabled students. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Document production: This document has been produced as part of a multidisciplinary team, including the members below:

Role
Academy Therapies Manager
Academy Occupational Therapist
Academy Physio Therapist
Academy Estates Manager
DCC ROVIC lead
DCC MSI specialist

3. Action plan

This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Aim	Current good practice <i>Including established practice and practice under development</i>	Objectives <i>State short, medium and long-term objectives</i>	Actions to be taken	Team/Person responsible	Date to complete actions by	Success criteria outcomes.
To ensure equal access to the curriculum for all students.	A new curriculum was partially designed and implemented in 2020 and is currently still being developed and adapted.	See Education, School & College QIP	See Education, School & College QIP	Education leads	Ongoing	See Education, School & College QIP
To increase staff confidence in differentiating the curriculum	Staff training skills audit completed.	Weekly CPD sessions tailored to staff training needs	Annual staff training audits to be completed	Education leads	Ongoing	Staff are able to identify their training needs and these are planned for within the academy CPD.
All staff are aware of students EHCP curriculum and	Dissemination of information for example, via Placement plans, EHCPs, ITPS, IEPS	Termly ITP, IEP targets. 6 monthly placement plan updates.	Ongoing reviews	Education and Therapy lead professionals.	Ongoing	All staff are aware of individual students' access needs

<p>therapeutic entitlement</p>		<p>Annual EHCP reviews</p>				<p>and plan accordingly to meet need.</p> <p>All staff are aware of the sensitive and confidential nature of this information.</p>
<p>All staff are aware of the resources available for specific students.</p>	<p>Dissemination of student placement plans.</p> <p>Student specific training/information sessions.</p> <p>Relevant training and acquisition of resources and or visuals to support student's needs are incorporated within the student's routine.</p> <p>Consultation and guidance with specialist teaching and therapeutic services.</p>	<p>Placement plans reviewed twice a year.</p> <p>Specific training as required</p>	<p>6 monthly meetings with teachers and Therapists to be added onto the academic calendar</p> <p>Review of placement plans to sit alongside the above and included on the academic calendar</p>	<p>All Education staff</p> <p>Therapy team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All staff are aware of student specific equipment for example AAC or hearing devises.</p>

<p>Ensure all Academy trips are accessible to all</p>				<p>Education team Therapies team Academy nurse</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All students are able to access all Academy trips and take part in a range of activities</p>
<p>To improve and maintain access to the physical environment</p>	<p>The Academy moved to brand-new purpose-built campus in September 2020. The new campus grounds and buildings were designed specifically to meet accessibility needs of students for all stages of education.</p> <p>The campus is designed in line with Part M of the building regulations with reference where appropriate to BS8300 "Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment" and Building Bulletin 102: disabled children and children</p>	<p>Ongoing regular maintenance and monitoring</p>	<p>Weekly visual inspections and maintaining servicing as per H & S law</p>	<p>Facilities Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Access to environment remains maintained.</p>

	<p>with SEN. Further to the this the design team worked with the Academy to develop bespoke designs to suit the specific needs of Deaf people.</p> <p>The existing Weston Theatre was also remodelled to suit the Academy's needs including additional acoustic treatment.</p> <p>The environment is designed to suit the needs of students.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <p>Generally level access with compliant ramps where required.</p> <p>Accessible parking bays and enlarged drop off area.</p> <p>Wider circulation routes to suit wheelchair users and</p>					
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	<p>those communicating with BSL.</p> <p>Fire Alarms complimented with Visual beacons to alert deaf people.</p>					
<p>To continue to train staff to enable them to meet the needs of students with SEND</p>	<p>MSI training for staff at the academy</p> <p>British Sign Language up to Level 3.</p>	<p>Staff are equipped with the skills to work with students with additional complex needs</p> <p>Staff have the voice to share concerns.</p>	<p>Review staff training needs (see staff training skills audit)</p> <p>Continue to enable staff to refer concerns about students to the Therapeutic Team regarding SEND need</p>	<p>Educational Leadership team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Regular monitoring of staff needs related to SEND students, progress and meeting their wider needs.</p> <p>Therapeutic team meets regularly to discuss referrals – actions fed back to the teacher</p>
<p>To provide specialist equipment to promote participation in learning by all students</p>	<p>Onsite:</p> <p>Occupational therapist</p> <p>Educational audiologist</p> <p>Physiotherapist</p>	<p>Ensure that in all curriculum areas students are assessed with the equipment they need to make academic progress</p>	<p>Assess the needs of students in each class, and on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that</p>	<p>Therapies Team and education teams</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Specialist equipment such as pencil grips, headphones, ear defenders, writing slopes, large</p>

			equipment needed is available.			calculators etc are purchased to support learning needs.
To meet the needs of individuals during exams/ tests	Students are currently assessed due to their individual needs. Students have additional time put in place such as extra time, British Sign Language interpreter, Scribe	Ensure that all students have ongoing yearly assessments and mock exams to prepare them for examinations.	Students will be assessed in accordance with the standards and testing agency guidelines. Those who regularly require modifications to support their needs will have changes made as necessary in line with their EHCP outcomes.	Education team Therapeutic team Quality, Exams and Funding Officer	Ongoing	We support the needs of those who require modifications to test practice Students feel comfortable and are able to undertake tests in an environment that suits their learning needs.
Improve access in the carpark area to allow for more disabled bays	There are currently four disabled bays	To increase the number of disabled bays	Improvements have been costed and agreed. Works to take place during summer 2023	Estates manager Estates working group	Ongoing	A further five disabled bays will be made available
Improve safe access to the academy site if on foot.		To have a zebra crossing put into place on Douglas	Ongoing, awaiting approval from DCC	Estates manager	Ongoing	Students can safely access the Academy on

		road outside the academy.		Estates working group		foot by use of a zebra crossing.
Improve signage and accessibility to site for visually impaired people and those with additional learning needs	<p>Carpeting: clear bold defined areas.</p> <p>All poles or support structures have either brilliant white or bold yellow banding down the length to ensure they are visible to all.</p> <p>Non cluttered environments including work areas, walls and flooring.</p> <p>Information posters have BSL QR code included</p>	Ensure students can access the academy site safely.	Site walk around the survey to be completed and areas needing improvement to be highlighted and actioned.	<p>Specialist in MSI</p> <p>Specialist in MSI accessibility</p> <p>Academy Therapies manager</p> <p>Academy Estates manager</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Completed 24/4/23</p> <p>Next review date 24/4/24</p>	Students wherever safely possible can independently access the academy site.
All disabled students can be safely evacuated	<p>Personal Emergency evacuation plans for individual students as necessary.</p> <p>Training on evacuation and fire</p>	<p>Estates team and selected others trained in use of Evacuation chairs</p> <p>Designated fire wardens across</p>	See evacuation procedures.	<p>Academy Estates manager</p> <p>Academy Therapies Manager</p>	Ongoing	All disabled students and staff working with them are safe and confident in the event of fire or other

	drills monitored and reviewed	school and college Visual fire alarm beacons in place across the academy				evacuation procedures.
Continue to identify areas where access can be improved and investigate if this is feasible and practical.	Regular site surveys and audits of the site All concerns are logged and placed on the schedule of maintenance. An Estates working group which meets regularly to discuss any proposed changes to the academy site	Access arrangements will improve	To ensure the academy is accessible for the wide ranging needs of its students and staff.	All Academy staff. Estates team Estates working group	Ongoing	Access arrangements will continue to improve and adapt according to need.
Parents and careers to have open accessible communications	A wide range of communication methods are used: PING, Email, Letters, 1:1			All Academy staff	Ongoing	Parents are able to communicate with the academy using their preferred mode of

with the Academy team	teams/zoom meetings					communication. The Academy provides a variety of information to parents via their preferred communication method
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4. Monitoring arrangements

This document will be reviewed every 3 years but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

It will be approved by senior leadership team and the Finance & Resources Committee.

5. Links with other policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Risk assessment policy
- Health and safety policy
- Special educational needs (SEN) information report
- Care of Students who are Unwell, including First Aid, Medical Emergencies, Care of those with Chronic Conditions and Disabilities and the Use of Household Remedies Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Admissions Policy

Appendix 1: Accessibility plan summary

Every school must have a school accessibility plan, which shows how they plan to improve accessibility for special educational needs pupils and when these improvements will be made. At the Deaf Academy, a multidisciplinary team of both internal and external professionals conducted a series of learning/accessibility walks across the site. These took place over a spread of dates and times to be able to observe variations across the educational day. The team was put together to pull on expertise which represented the wide ranging current student profile at the Academy.

Multidisciplinary team	Date learning walk conducted
Michele Jones: Occupational therapist, The Deaf Academy:	09/03/23
Gemma Brandon: Physio therapist, The Deaf Academy	23/03/23
Joel Murphy: Rehabilitation Officer for Visually Impaired Children (ROVIC)	16/02/23
Scott Lowther: MSI and AAC specialist Devon County Council	16/02/23
Chris Watts: Academy Estates Manager	16/02/23
Samantha Jones: Therapies Manager, The Deaf Academy	Attended all above dates.

The three main themes which were focused upon during the learning/accessibility walks across the site included the physical environment, sharing of information and access to the curriculum. Please see below a list of key areas which fell into the three main themes:

The physical environment

This included aspects such as:

- Lighting, paint schemes and visual identifications of paths to help visually impaired children.
- Physical access of the building such as lifts and ramps to help physically impaired children.
- Carpeting, acoustic environment and social spaces to help hearing impaired pupils.
- The provision of information being shared around the academy to include QR codes with BSL interpretation and visual glare for MSI students.

The sharing of Information

This includes aspects such as:

- The way that information that is normally given in writing (such as handouts, timetables and textbooks) can be made more accessible by being offered in other formats such as BSL translations through the use of QR codes or visuals/PICS.
- The use of IT and AAC software systems to assist with learning.

Access to the curriculum

Adjustments to the curriculum included:

- Changes to teaching and learning arrangements
- Classroom organisation
- Timetabling

Following the learning/accessibility walks across the site an accessibility plan was developed. This plan sets out a summary of current good practice, key objectives, actions required, the identified lead for actions, a completion date and what success looks like.