

Accessibility Plan

Rowena Academy

Accessibility Plan

At Rowena Academy it is our intention to remove, as far as we can, those barriers which make it hard for children and adults with a disability to take part in the day to day life of our academy and benefit from the educational experiences and services we provide.

We aim to ensure that our academy is a welcoming place that understands and responds effectively to children and adults with disabilities and we recognise the importance of a review and planning procedure associated with continuous development and improvement.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'

This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people They must not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person's disability They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage. Schools are allowed to treat disabled children / young people more favourably than non-disabled children / young people, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments and making changes to practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what the school's offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can i.e. to put them on a more level footing with children / young people without disabilities Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people. Public bodies also have specific duties under the public sector equality duty and

must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and must prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty.

Objectives must be specific and measurable.

The duties cover discrimination in the provision of services and the provision of education, including admissions and exclusions. All providers must make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices and by the provision of auxiliary aids and services. The Education Advisory Body (EAB) and proprietors must also publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and their accessibility plans.

The Responsible Body (Education Advisory Body)

The responsible body (EAB) must prepare an accessibility plan.

An accessibility plan is a plan for, over a prescribed period - increasing the extent to which disabled children / young people can participate in the school's curriculum; improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled children / young people are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and improving the delivery to disabled children / young people –

- (i) within a reasonable time, and
- (ii) in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents, of information which is provided in writing for children / young people who are not disabled. An accessibility plan must be in writing.

During the period to which the plan relates, the responsible body must keep its accessibility plan under review and, if necessary, revise it. It is the duty of the responsible body to implement its accessibility plan.

Schools have had a duty to produce an accessibility plan since September 2002. These initial plans should have been in place by April 2003.

The Statutory Policies for Schools (Sept 2014) states that it is a requirement that maintained schools, academies, free schools, independent schools, sixth-form colleges, further education colleges and Pupil Referral Units must review their accessibility plan every three years. It also states that approval should be by the governing body however, they are free to delegate the approval right to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the head teacher.

Other relevant legislation, regulations & guidance:

- Children & Families Act (2014)
- The Special Educational Needs & Disability Regulations (2014)
- The SEND Code of Practice (revised April 2015)
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012)
- Disability Discrimination Order (2006)
- The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice: Protecting the vulnerable (2005)
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 & 3
- DfES "Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils"
- Health Standards (England) Regulations 2003

Academy Context

We are a Nursery and Infant Academy for children, aged from 3 years to 7 years. The school comprises of one main building of one storey construction and of three smaller separate buildings (Nursery, Reception Unit and a Resource Room). The building is accessible to wheelchair users. There are disabled toilets in the main building and the Nursery.

Academy Aims

At Rowena Academy we will strive to enable all pupils at Rowena to:

- have high self-esteem, respecting and caring for themselves and others;
- communicate confidently and effectively;
- develop and grow intellectually, physically, spiritually and creatively, to realise their full potential;
- achieve the highest possible standards in all areas of the curriculum and personal behaviour;
- become highly motivated lifelong learners;
- be reflective, collaborative and independent learners;
- have the personal and technological skills necessary to contribute and adapt to a rapidly changing world;
- have a high regard for the environment and a clear understanding of how to care for it;
- be aware of and value the rich cultural diversity of the world we live in.

We believe each pupil will succeed through experiencing:

- a welcoming and stimulating learning environment;
- enjoyment in learning;
- a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum which encompasses the local community and has a
- global dimension;
- an enriching programme of extra-curricular activities and visits;
- an ethos of support, challenge and encouragement;
- high quality teaching and learning opportunities;
- effective learning partnerships between home, school and the community.

We are committed to developing as a learning community by:

- striving for continuous improvement in all that we do;
- managing through open and effective communication;
- working collaboratively towards common goals.

Formulating our Accessibility Plan

The priorities for the Accessibility Plan were identified by a planning group who consisted of:

- Principal
- Vice Principal (EAB staff member)
- SENCO
- Office Manager / Bursar

Process

Our accessibility plan has been developed as follows:

- Access audit and review of current activities completed.
- Actions to eliminate barriers identified (with short-term, medium term and long term targets).
- Consultation
- Publication of the plan.
- Plan implemented and resources allocated.
- Evaluated every 3 years (with the accessibility plan under on-going review and revision as necessary).

In addition to this we will continually review the environment of the school, the way we plan, prepare and deliver the curriculum and the information we provide for children so that we can improve the access for both individuals and groups; work to provide an atmosphere where all children feel safe and valued; promote understanding of disability and work to show positive models of people with a disability. We will avoid stereotypes and use language which emphasises the person rather than the disability. We will examine those parts of our active and extra-curricular activities which may have limited access for children / young people with a disability and see if it is possible to provide learning experiences which promote similar development of knowledge and understanding.

Accessing the Academy Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan will be available on the academy website and in print version on request.

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

Curriculum

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Staff Development

Health & Safety (including off-site safety)

Special Educational Needs Policy and the school's SEN Information Report.

Behaviour Management

Academy Development Plan

School Brochure and Mission Statement

The School's Complaints Procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

Attached is a set of audits and action plans relating to the key aspects of accessibility.

Period covered by the policy: September 2016 - 2019

Policy agreed: September 2016

Accessibility Plan Date: September 2016 (revised September 2017)

Policy to be reviewed: September 2019