

EQUITAS ACADEMIES TRUST



EQUALITY SCHEME AND DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Review Date: September 2025
To be Reviewed: July 2027
Agreed: Full Trust Board
Policy Lead: Director of SEND across the Trust

EQUALITY SCHEME AND DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

1. OVERVIEW

Equitas Academies Trust works hard to ensure that the culture and ethos of the Trust are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of each school community, everyone is equally valued and treated with respect. This Trust provides students with the opportunity to experience understand and value diversity.

This policy replaces and builds on duties originally set out in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and SENDA (2001/2004), now consolidated under the Equality Act 2010.

It also draws on the guidance set out in “Accessing School: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils” issued by the DFES in July 2002.

This policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which require schools to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between different groups.

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The Trust believes: *‘A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This means that in general the person must have an impairment that is either physical or mental; the impairment must have adverse effects which are substantial; the substantial adverse effects must be long-term; and the long-term substantial adverse effects must be effects on normal day-to-day activities.’* (Equality Act 2010)

The Trust has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, eliminate disability related harassment, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage disabled people to participate in school life.

The Trust believes it is our duty to prepare and publish a disability equality scheme that will outline accessibility to each Academy premises and its facilities, accessibility to the curriculum, accessibility of educational services, provision of training for Trust personnel and students which result in improved outcomes for disabled students, parents/carers and Trust personnel in all aspects of school life.

The Trust is proud of the ethos of support, collaboration and respect for one another. The Trust strives to create a safe caring environment for all students to experience success, happiness and excellence. All Trust users will benefit from the disability equality scheme as it will allow them to take full benefit of the opportunities that this Trust offers.

The Trust is committed to providing as fully accessible environment as possible, given the restraints of each building. It values and includes all students, Trust personnel, 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.

Each Academy within the Trust has in place an Accessibility Action Plan designed to increase the accessibility of provision for all students, staff and visitors to each Academy within the Trust.

Both Academies work closely with the School Council / Student Voice and hear their views and opinions. The Trust acknowledges and supports Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Trust publishes measurable equality objectives every three years and reviews progress annually. These objectives are focused on improving accessibility, participation and outcomes for pupils, staff and families.

2. AIMS

- To ensure that all Trust personnel with disabilities are treated fairly in regard to recruitment, performance management, promotion, staff development, teaching environment and access to each Academy premises.

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access the curriculum and to have full participation in the school community for students, prospective students and adult users with a disability.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.
- The Trust's equality objectives are reviewed annually and published on the Trust website. Progress is measured using pupil data, staff data and stakeholder feedback to ensure continued improvement in access and inclusion.

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Role of the Trust Board

The Trust Board has:

- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Local Advisory Committee;
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Local Headteachers to ensure all Trust personnel and stakeholders are aware of and comply with this policy;
- a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and with the Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice (2002);
- a duty under the DDA (as amended by the SENDA) to publish an Accessibility Plan but not to:
 - discriminate against disabled students in our admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services;
 - treat disabled students less favourably;
 - take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage.
- the responsibility to work with parents to ensure the full needs of each individual child are met as we value parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their ability to carry out normal activities;
- a duty to respect the child's and parent's right to confidentiality;
- the responsibility of providing all students with a broad and balanced curriculum which is differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students;
- The Trust endorses the key principles in the national curriculum which underpin inclusion by setting suitable learning challenges, responding to diverse learning needs, and overcoming barriers to learning."
- responsibility for ensuring that the Trust complies with all equalities legislation;

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- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.
- Review the Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan annually in line with PSED reporting requirements.
- Ensure publication of equality information and objectives on the Trust website.
- Monitor equality impact across all academies using pupil outcomes, recruitment data and accessibility audits.
- Appoint a named Trustee responsible for equality and accessibility.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- in conjunction with the Trust Board, devise a new plan every three years;
- oversee the implementation of the policy, Scheme and Plan;
- ensure all Trust personnel, students and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- report to the Trust Board on the procedures in place for Trust personnel with disabilities;
- monitor the effectiveness of the Disability Accessibility Plan for Students;
- Ensure a named member of the Senior Leadership Team acts as the Equality and Accessibility Lead.
- Oversee the completion of an annual accessibility audit and report findings to the Trust Board.
- Promote a culture of inclusion and model good practice in equality and accessibility.

Role of the Senior Leadership Team of each Academy within the Trust

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- provide resources to support this policy;
- monitor the progress and development of this policy;

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- Conduct annual Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on new policies or procedures.
- Ensure the curriculum, teaching resources and school environment are inclusive for all students.
- Monitor accessibility plans and ensure actions are resourced and implemented effectively.

Role of the Trust Personnel

Trust personnel will:

- comply with all aspects of this policy;
- implement the Trust's equalities policy and schemes;
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination;
- attend appropriate training sessions on equality;
- report any concerns they have on any aspect.
- Undertake annual equality and diversity training as part of professional development.
- Record and report any incidents of discrimination, harassment or inequality in line with Trust procedures.

Role of the Students

Students will:

- listen carefully to all instructions given by the teacher;
- ask for further help if they do not understand;
- treat others, their work and equipment with respect;
- support the school Code of Conduct (Rules, Expectations and Procedures) and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the Academy;
- liaise with the school council;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys/focus groups.

Role of the Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will:

- be asked to take part in periodic surveys conducted by the Trust;
- support the school Code of Conduct (Rules, Expectations and Procedures) and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the Trust

4. TRAINING

- The Trust ensures all personnel have equal chances of training, career development and promotion.
- Periodic training will be organised for all Trust personnel so that they are kept up to date with new information and guidelines concerning equal opportunities.
- Equality, diversity and accessibility awareness training will form part of induction and be refreshed annually. Training will include reasonable adjustments, inclusive classroom practice, unconscious bias, and supporting pupils with disabilities and medical conditions.
- Training records are maintained and monitored by HR or the Trust's central team.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Trust will:

- Collect and analyse data relating to pupil progress, attendance, exclusions, and participation by disability, gender and ethnicity.
- Review the impact of the Accessibility Plan and Equality Objectives annually.
- Publish updates on the Trust and academy websites.
- Use feedback from pupils, parents, and staff to inform improvements.
- This policy and plan will be formally reviewed every three years by the Trust Board, with annual progress reports.

6. Consultation

- The Trust consults widely when developing and reviewing this plan. Feedback is sought from:
- Students through School Council and Student Voice groups;
- Parents and carers through surveys and meetings;
- Staff, including those with disabilities;
- External partners such as occupational therapists, educational psychologists, and SEND services.

Date of next Review: July 2027

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2025– 2027

The Accessibility Plan sets out the actions to increase access for pupils with disabilities in the curriculum, environment, and communication.

INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The effect in law has not changed in that, “schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy or maternity.

The Department for Education (DfE) stipulates that schools must have an Accessibility Plan to comply with the act.

As a school or academy, we must

- Carry out accessibility planning, removing barriers for all disabled pupils.
- Ensure that disabled pupils can access and participate fully in the curriculum.
Improve the physical environment of our schools (within the limits of the buildings and outside facilities) to enable disabled students to take full of advantage of education and facilities.
- Improve the availability of accessible information for disabled pupils.

Additionally, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires all schools to:

- Eliminate discrimination which is unlawful
- Eliminate harassment of those with a disability
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled individuals
- Take steps to take account of disabilities and encourage independence for our disabled pupils to help them prepare for adulthood.

It is a requirement that our schools’ Accessibility Plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary. The following is an action plan outlining how the schools will address the priorities identified in the plan.

ACTION PLAN –*this plan should be read in conjunction with and alongside the Trust’s Equal Opportunities and SEND policies.*

Reasonable Adjustments

It is our duty and our practice to make reasonable adjustments for all members of the Trust’s community. Where any resource or activity in school places a disabled person at a disadvantage compared to others then we will take all possible steps to avoid that disadvantage, eg. disadvantaged students leave all lessons early to avoid crowded corridors. If an activity is not accessible by a disabled student then we will provide a different activity wherever possible. We use resources tailored to the needs of students who require support to access the curriculum. Targets are set effectively and are appropriate for students with additional needs. Our Academies offer a differentiated curriculum which is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs all students.

Chilwell Croft Academy has one designated disability parking space near the main entrance. There is a Disabled Access toilet/changing area accessible from the main entrance. The School also has an Intimate Care Facility to support pupils with personal care needs and a lift providing access between floors, improving accessibility across the building. In the event of a fire alarm, the designated evacuation point is located on the playground to the rear of the school.

Aston Manor Academy has 3 Disability parking spaces near to the main entrance. However, due to limited parking space generally, these spaces need to be booked in advance. There is a Disabled Access toilet/changing area located in the 6th form building but which is accessible from the main entrance.

At Aston Manor Academy there is a Secondary Evacuation Point outside the front of the main building for disabled and otherwise vulnerable staff and students to report in the event of a fire alarm. The Main Evacuation Point is located at the top of 2 flights of stairs.

The Trust also ensures digital accessibility, providing electronic documents, websites, and learning platforms that meet recognised accessibility standards. Information can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, audio or Braille on request.

How will we know our provisions work?

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We review, revise and refine the impact of provisions we put in place regularly with students , staff, external agencies and families. We do this through regular observations, termly reviews and assessments to monitor outcomes. We use the Assess, Plan, Do, Review model.

How will we monitor progress?

As well as information and pupil data contained in the Provision Map and on individual Learning Plans and One Page Profiles, we will also evaluate:

Attendance data

Behaviour/~~rewards data~~

Academic Tracking ~~including marking scrutiny~~

~~Exam success~~

Target Tracker

Ability and willingness to participate in the life of the school

~~Ability to access special needs resources, eg Inhaler or Diabetes monitor~~

Supported transitions and Post 16 placement

Parental evaluation sought at Annual Reviews and Parents evenings.

The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed annually by each academy's Senior Leadership Team and the Trust Board. Progress against targets will be reported to governors and published online.

The plan focuses on three key areas:

- **Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;**
- **Improving the physical environment to increase access for all;**
- **Improving the availability of accessible information.**

Accessibility Plan

School Name Chilwell Croft Academy and Aston Manor Academy (Equitas Trust)

Dates: From: September 25 To: JULY 2027

	TARGET	STRATEGIES	OUTCOME	TIME FRAME	GOALS ACHIEVED
Short Term	Improve the progress and participation for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities so that they are fully involved in school life.	Successful transition of any pupils with SEND facilitated by meetings between AMA and CCA, feeder schools, nurseries and relevant agencies. Universal in-class support for individual staff provided by the Inclusion Dept on request. Ongoing and appropriate training is provided throughout the year.	Successful transition and implementation of individual provisions.	July of each Academic Year	SEND students'/children's progress and participation matches that of their peers. Increase in access to the National Curriculum. Staff aware of individual needs of children/students.
	Improve progress of children with Speech and Language needs at Chilwell Croft Academy.	Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 mixed year group Provisions within school which address additional Speech and Language needs by high staff ratio, small group teaching. Mainly 1-1	Improve progress of children with additional language needs.	Ongoing	Children meet targets and make progress. Improves access to the curriculum. Improves social skills. SEND Support Provision Plans and EHC Plans put in place where appropriate.
	Alternative fire exit arrangements for students and adults who cannot access the usual route at AMA. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans provided for relevant SEND children/students.	Lead person to monitor and escort staff and students to safe space at the front of Aston Manor Academy. All fire marshals to wear visible jacket. Plans written and shared with staff, parents and children. Lead staff trained in their role in case of an emergency. Plans stored in accessible place available to all.	SEND staff and students evacuate to an accessible place of safety. Plans followed in event of fire or fire drill.	Ongoing Ongoing. Reviewed annually.	Safe evacuation and monitoring of staff and children's/student's whereabouts. Safe and efficient evacuation of children.
	Emergency medication box in case of fire alarm.	Lead person to take appropriate medical boxes to the evacuation points.	Medical equipment will be out of the building if a student/staff requires it in the event of a fire.	Ongoing	Lead members of staff take medications to the main evacuation points during a fire drill.

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Medium Term	To ensure evacuation signs can be accessed from all parts of building by everyone	Accessibility monitoring during fire drills with a particular focus on pupils with physical disabilities. Site staff to maintain clear signage around school	All students and staff are able to access an evacuation signs from wherever they are in the building.	Ongoing	Physical accessibility of school increased. Correct safe routes are easy to find in event of evacuation.
	Safe staircases with visible edges to improve accessibility.	Site staff to maintain visible edges on indoor and outdoor staircases.	Improve visibility and safety for all users.		All internal and external staircases highly visible.
	SEND pupils including wheelchair user's accessibility to classroom with their peers.	Move whole class of children downstairs, add ramp to auxiliary classroom. Work closely with Occupational Therapy Service and Physical Difficulties Team to ensure correct equipment is provided for child. With support from OT and PD write Physical Difficulties Plans and Occupational Therapy plans for individual children. OT and PD Teams train staff.	SEND children access learning with their peers. Child's needs are met – not sitting for too long. Team of staff follow plan in case of emergency. Physio exercises done correctly and at the right time	Ongoing Annually Reviewed Termly	SEND children are included in all learning and activities all day every day.
	Adjustable furniture	To support students accordingly to their need. Eg. Adjustable chairs can be raised to use with standing frame.	Students are able to access their learning safely and effectively.	ongoing	SEND students are included with their peers in learning and socialising, eating lunch etc.
	To support students with medical needs	Storage/fridge is accessible and available for insulin and hypo treatments, asthma inhalers and epi-pens. Individual student medical needs box labelled and stored securely in case of emergency and readily available for trips and residential. Details uploaded to Evolve. All staff are trained annually in use of	Private room is provided with fridge. All medication is up to date. A trained member of staff is always available. Children's needs are met daily and/or in case of emergency	Annually	Children with medical needs attend school every day and are safe and healthy. They can access all activities including extra-curricular and trips.

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		EpiPen and a register of staff willing to administer is reviewed and updated at the same time. All staff trained re: Epilepsy. Nurse trains all staff re: Complex Diabetes Specific staff trained re: Complex Diabetes – diet and monitoring and use of feeding tubes.			
Long Term	To ensure all areas of school are accessible for students and staff with physical difficulties	Liaison between the inclusion team and Physio/OT to purchase specialist equipment for classroom and toilet access for pupils with PD. Chilwell Croft are meeting with appropriate organisations to obtain funding and plan more accessible areas to meet needs of SEND children including a lift and an Intimate Care Facility	All areas of school will be as accessible as possible Suitable and appropriate facilities to sensitively care for children with complex learning needs.	Ongoing	All students with SEND are able to access as many areas of school as possible. (Considering some physical limitations of some buildings) Improved access to full school participation for SEND children with complex learning needs.

Linked Policies

Trust Equality and Diversity Policy

SEND Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Recruitment and Selection Policy