

AIREDALE ACADEMY TRUST
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
Version 1.0

1. Introduction

At Airedale Academy we believe in supporting pupils to help them achieve their very best academically, socially and personally whilst also preparing them for life beyond education. Our ambition is to see pupils discover, aim for and achieve their dreams, with all members of the school community 'Striving for Excellence'

This Accessibility Plan seeks to address the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to further the aims of our Academy by continuing to improve the physical environment of the Academy and other resources so that all disabled pupils (whether their disability is temporary or permanent) can take full advantage of the education and associated opportunities provided by the Academy and that the Academy can support staff who have or develop a disability to fulfil their duties as an employee.

"A person suffers a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities"

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight or hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long term and substantial effect on an individual's everyday life.

This plan covers all three main strands of the planning duty:

- Improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education and associated services, parents with disabilities can be fully involved in their child's education, and staff with disabilities are supported to fulfil their duties.
- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum.
- Improving the delivery of information to students, staff and parents with disabilities.

2. Context

2.1 Physical environment

Airedale Academy is a predominantly 1960s CLASP building with three post-1996 additions. The site is separated into two blocks – lower and upper – separated by a steep embankment with steps and a ramp to provide wheelchair access between the two blocks. The majority of the site is at ground floor level; however, there are two two-storey blocks and two single storey blocks accessible by staircase only. Above ground floor level these house some of the science classrooms, some Maths classrooms, some IT rooms, the staff rest/work room and Humanities classrooms.

Where new blocks have been added or refurbishment has taken place, consideration has been given in their planning to accessibility issues, in line with the prevailing guidance at the time. All ground floor classrooms, social spaces and offices can now be accessed via ramps or level access. A number of disabled toilet facilities are provided around the site and there are designated disabled parking bays located in all car parks. Some specialist equipment, such as adjustable workstations, has been purchased.

2.2 Access to curriculum

The curriculum is carefully designed to meet the needs of learners so that all can access a broad and balanced curriculum. Individual needs are identified and the curriculum is differentiated and adapted as appropriate. Students are supported in their choices where choices are available and every effort is made to ensure that no student is prevented by their disability from accessing learning opportunities which are appropriate to their needs. Where subjects require specialist equipment or facilities, these are adapted as far as practicable to ensure that students with disabilities are not prevented from participating, given cost and time constraints.

2.3 Access to information

Staff, students and visitors are asked to alert the Academy if they require information in an alternative format.

2.4 Recent developments

- School hall rebuilt as Castleford Phoenix Theatre which benefits from level access with automatic doors to foyer, designated wheelchair spaces in auditorium, lift access to backstage/dressing room areas, corridors with handrails, induction loop to Box Office.
- High-visibility markings added to edge of external steps.
- Microphone installed in Food Technology room to improve sound levels for students with hearing difficulties.
- Adjustable work area comprising eye-level oven, adjustable sink unit and mobile induction hob incorporated into refurbished Food Technology room.
- Medical room with first aid facilities and couch.
- DDA-compliant new-build administration extension to facilitate access by disabled staff, students and visitors.
- Reception area refurbished to include dropped level element for wheelchair visitors.
- Accessible visitors' room created off reception.
- Fundraising activities for local wheelchair basketball team.
- Installation of blinds to classrooms to improve visibility for visually-impaired students.
- Completion of IWB installation programme into all classrooms.
- Provision of student support area with dedicated mentors to provide additional support to students with emotional, social or behavioural difficulties.

3. Strategy

Airedale Academy aims over time to increase the accessibility of provision for all students, staff and visitors including those with disabilities.

Our strategies to do this will include:

- having high expectations of all students;
- finding ways in which all students can take part in the full curriculum including sport, music and extra-curricular activities;
- planning out of school activities so that students and staff with disabilities can participate;
- setting admission criteria which does not discriminate against students with disabilities or treat them unfairly;
- devising teaching strategies which will remove barriers to learning and participation for students with disabilities;
- planning the improvement and the modification of the physical environment of the school to cater for the needs of students, staff and visitors with disabilities;
- raising awareness of disability amongst all members of the school community;
- providing information for students and staff with disabilities in a form which meets the needs of the user;
- using language which does not offend in all literature and making staff and students aware of the importance of language.

4. Principles of the Accessibility Plan

The general principal underpinning this plan is that we will make such changes as are practicable to meet the foreseeable needs of our current and future school population (balancing this against cost considerations), but that our priorities and plans may change to accommodate the changing needs of individuals or notification to the Academy of a student/member of staff/parent due to join our community who has specific requirements.

4.1 Meeting individual needs

The Academy will endeavour to meet the needs of any individual student or member of staff who requires special adaptation to normal routines, procedures or facilities in order to participate in the life of the Academy, as far as is reasonably practicable.

Relevant modifications to delivery of the curriculum are negotiated on an individual basis as required. The Academy actively seeks the support and advice of relevant services or organisations to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students. In the case of students due to be admitted to the Academy, discussion about any necessary adaptations will take place between the Deputy Head responsible for Admissions and the pupil's parents prior to admission (with involvement of the SENCo as appropriate). For students already registered at the Academy, discussions will take place with the SENCo. In the case of staff, discussion will take place with the HR Officer.

4.2 Redevelopment or refurbishment

When areas of the Academy are being redeveloped or refurbished, consideration will be given at an early stage to measures which could be incorporated which will improve access to the facilities or provision offered by the Academy. This may include:

- Ensuring that specialist facilities (e.g. catering, horticulture, performing arts, construction) are accessible for mobility impaired users where practicable through the provision of specific equipment or adapted areas
- Making all relevant switches, alarm buttons and door handles at wheelchair height
- Provision of ramps where none already exist to facilitate ease of movement between areas of the Academy

In all these cases, however, a balance will need to be struck between the cost of such measures and their likely degree of use.

5. Accessibility Action Plan

As part of the Accessibility Plan our aims and objectives are as follows:

A – Improve the physical environment of the Academy

1. Improve circulation around the school site for disabled students, staff and visitors
2. Ensure that areas where services are provided to the public take into account the needs of people with disabilities
3. Ensure that any new or refurbished specialist facilities are designed to cater for the needs of pupils with disabilities

B – Increase participation in the curriculum

1. Ensure that no student is prevented by their disability from engaging in a qualification which is suitable for them
2. Ensure that as many students as possible can access the full range of extra-curricular provision (including trips and visits)

C – Improve the delivery of information

1. Ensure that staff, students and parents are communicated with in a way that meets their needs

The details of how these objectives will be achieved are incorporated into the Accessibility Action Plan, included at Annex 1.

ANNEX 1 – Accessibility Plan

A - IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE ACADEMY			
Ref.	Objective	Action	Timescale
1a.	Improve circulation around school site for disabled students, staff and visitors	Provide access ramp to new Sixth Form entrance	By September 2013
1b.		Provide access ramp to doors below Music department	By September 2013
1c.		Investigate the options for providing ramped access between student social area and Y7 base (currently stairs)	By September 2013
1d.		Investigate the cost and feasibility of incorporating high visibility nosings to all internal steps	By July 2013
2a.	Ensure that areas where services are provided to the public take into account the needs of people with disabilities	Incorporate dropped level serving area into plans for new Theatre Foyer bar	By September 2013
2b.		Investigate the cost and feasibility of adding an automatic push button mechanism to Main Reception door	By September 2013
3a.	Ensure that new specialist facilities are designed to cater for the needs of pupils with disabilities	Incorporate ramps, wheelchair accessible beds and workbenches into the new horticulture area	By September 2013
3b.		Incorporate dropped level serving area into plans for new student coffee shop	By September 2013
3c.		Consider needs of students with disabilities in plans for refurbishment of Sports Centre changing rooms	By July 2013
B – INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE CURRICULUM			
1a.	Ensure that no student is prevented by their disability from engaging in a qualification which is suitable for them	Audit the barriers and potential barriers to students with disabilities engaging in the various programmes offered, with a view to developing strategies for ensuring all pupils can participate in suitable courses	By December 2013
1b.		Identify subjects and qualifications where the participation of disabled students cannot be accommodated in the short to medium term, and identify suitable alternative provision (e.g. availability of alternative sports for disabled students wishing to study GCSE PE)	By April 2014
2a.	Ensure that as many students as possible can access the full range of	Engage the support of the EVC to ensure that staff leading trips and visits have considered how students with disabilities could be enabled to participate	By September 2013

2b.	extra-curricular provision (including trips and visits)	Audit the barriers and potential barriers to students with disabilities engaging in the various extra-curricular opportunities offered, with a view to developing strategies for ensuring all pupils who wish to can participate	By September 2013
C – IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION			
1a.		Include a question during induction about whether staff have a disability which means they would benefit from information being provided in a different format	By September 2013
1b.	Ensure that staff, students and parents are communicated with in a way that meets their needs	Ask parents at admission whether they need information about their child or messages from the school provided in a particular format (e.g. written, audio, large print) and record this on SIMS	By September 2013
1c.		Ensure that a message about the Academy being prepared to provide information in alternative formats is incorporated into all new publications and on the website	By June 2013