

Accessibility Plan

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act – DDA, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, requires all Schools, academies and LAs to plan to increase, over time, accessibility for disabled students. Academies are required to produce plans for their individual establishment and LAs are required to prepare accessibility strategies covering the maintained schools in their areas.

Melior Community Academy and Delta are required to plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled students to the curriculum
- Improving access to the Academy's physical environment (buildings and grounds)
- Improving written information for disabled students

At a legislative level there are three main strands for disabled students:

- The SEN Framework (the Education Act 1996 and the SEN and Disability Act 2001)
- The Disability Discrimination Duties (Sections 28A-28C of the DDA 1995)
- The planning duties (Section 28D-28E of the DDA 1995)

The Education Act 1996 states that 'children have a special educational need if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them'. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- Have a disability which prevents, or hinders, them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LA
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the above definitions, or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

1. Starting Points

1.1 The purpose and Direction of the Academy's scheme

Melior Community Academy endorses an accessibility strategy that aims to increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the Academy curriculum. The following plan outlines what measures the Academy is taking to improve access for all students.

1.2 Involvement of disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the school

For students with a Statement of SEN, the views and aspirations of disabled students will be formally gathered annually through an annual review process. This will seek to establish what is going well and also any concerns or barriers to progress from the student's point of view. Their parents also have the opportunity to express their views either in writing or simply verbally at the review meeting.

This includes the opportunity to express any concerns or queries they may have regarding their child's progress and the provision in place for them.

Areas for development:

- Questionnaire / audit issued to appropriate parents and analysis of results
- Amendments of the Disability Equality Scheme and Access Plan as a result of information gathered

1.3 Information gathering

Within the current academy population there are currently 11 students with a Statement of Special Educational Need, 33 students on the SEN Register.

Disabled students currently in the academy have the following additional needs:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD - including Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Development Disorder)
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Diabetes
- Behavioural, Emotional, (and Social) Difficulties (BESD)
- Epilepsy
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Visual Impairment (VI)
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD – including Dyslexia and Dyspraxia)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Definition

Students falling within the definition of disabled will have a wide range of needs and requirements including: mobility impairment, sensory impairment, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, asthma and progressive/degenerative conditions.

The Academy will not automatically consider students with a disability to have special educational needs, as can be seen below.

The DDA definition states that 'a person has a disability if he or 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'.

Definition of disability

The Equality Act duties are there to ensure all students who are defined by the Equality Act as being disabled have improved access to all aspects of schools and that the academy has a duty to plan, wherever it is reasonable, to better access for disabled students.

- The Equality Act defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (see definition below of normal day-to-day activities).
- Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments.
- In the Equality Act 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. 'Long-term' means has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.

The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning difficulties, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, where the effect of the impairment on the student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is adverse, substantial and long-term. All those with cancer or surviving cancer; HIV or Multiple Sclerosis are now included from the point of diagnosis.

Related Academy Policies

- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- Anti- Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

The first four documents describe the academy's policy for promoting equal opportunities for disabled pupils and pupils with SEN; the fourth policy includes provision for pupils with medical needs

Normal day-to-day activity

The test of whether the impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects the student in everyday life in one or more of the following ways:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical co-ordination;
- 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.

Impact Assessment

For the purpose of the DDA 1995 schools, academies and LAs are required to consider the needs of students in relation to physical adaptations, curriculum access and auxiliary aids and services.

Please note that these duties are all 'anticipatory'; Melior Community Academy will consider the requirements of current and future disabled students. This means that Melior Community academy is expecting to make reasonable enquiries to find out whether children currently on roll, as well as those seeking admission, have a disability.

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the Academy.

In deciding whether a step is reasonable, the Academy may take into account the need to maintain:

1. Academic standards
2. Available resources
3. The practicalities of making a particular adjustment
4. The health and safety of the disabled students and others and the interests of others

The Academy embraces the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act and the requirement to implement a Disability Equality Scheme. The Academy does all that is reasonably practicable to meet the needs of the disabled students, staff or visitors. The Assistant Principal/SENCO and Intervention Coordinator will work closely with the relevant advisory bodies in order to provide the most appropriate support to students with disabilities. This process invariably involves working closely with the student and the student's family.

Every effort is made to integrate disabled persons into the mainstream activities of the Academy. The Assistant Principal/SENCO will continue to monitor the effectiveness of strategies put in place to accommodate persons with disabilities and instigates appropriate action to ensure appropriate physical accommodations are made and that, where necessary procedural and timetabling changes are made

CONTENTS OF ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

In this Accessibility Plan any reference to Melior Community Academy refers to the whole school including.

With regards to the legislation and related guidance, Melior Community Academy aims to improve accessibility by:

- Increasing access for disabled students to the curriculum

- Improving access to the Academy's physical environment
- Improving written information for disabled students

The following plan outlines the Academy's policies in relation to Access and Disability.

ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

When a pupil with a disability is admitted to Melior Community Academy then the academy will make reasonable adjustments to enable the pupil to access the curriculum by:

- Ensuring that all staff receive the necessary training to be able to teach and support the pupil.
- Endeavouring to organise teaching in accessible classrooms. (e.g. Art, ICT, Design and Technology are located upstairs in specialist classrooms to which there is no disabled access by wheelchair)
- Differentiate work so that it is accessible to disabled pupils.
- Modify the curriculum as applicable.
- Make appropriate adjustments to time allowed and expected outcomes of work to be completed by disabled pupils.
- Allow pupils alternative methods of recording work, where it is affordable by the academy.
- Include pupils on academy visits provided that, following a risk assessment to the health and safety needs of the pupils, and others on the trip, it is safe to do so. Additional resources needed on health and safety grounds will be charged for.
- Encouraging disabled pupils to take a full part in the curriculum including extracurricular activities.
- Risk Assessment put in place to support the pupil and the appropriate adjustments needed for example leaving lessons early to avoid large crowds and lesson change over
- Buddy system for disabled students to support access in and around the academy

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT - see Disabled access policy