

Accessibility Plan and Equality Objectives

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Accessibility Plan and Equality Objectives

1 Introduction

The following policy is The Ascent Academies' Trust's response to the requirement for schools to have an **accessibility plan**. This is a statutory requirement (see DfE's guidance on statutory policies for schools) and the Trust is committed to ensuring that the principles and actions contained within the policy are enacted in the best interests of all of our students.

The Equality Act 2010¹ came into force on 1 October 2010 and replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The effect of the law is the same as the previous legislation, in that **“schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against students because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation”**.

Advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on the Equality Act 2010 explains that schools/academies must have an accessibility plan to comply with the Act, just as they did under the DDA. Schools must ensure that they are meeting their duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which replaced previous statutory duties for schools on race, gender and disability.

Trustees are aware that our accessibility plan is listed as a statutory document in the DfE's guidance on statutory policies for schools. The guidance also requires that the policy is:

- Reviewed and reported on annually and drawn up/updated every three years
- Approved by the Board of Trustees, who are free to delegate this to a committee of Trustees, an individual Trustee or the Head of Academy. The Trust delegates the approval of this policy to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) together with approval of the individual academy's plans.

Additionally, where disabled students are placed at a substantial disadvantage, schools must consider whether any reasonable adjustment can be made to overcome that disadvantage. This must be done within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking account of the student's disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents. Liaison with parents/carers and the students themselves is an important part of the Trust's approach.

2 How should an accessibility plan be published?

- The Academy's accessibility plan is a freestanding document.
- It is also available on the Trust's website.

¹ Equality Act 2010

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

3 What is included in our accessibility plan?

In addition to the Trust's overarching policy, each of our academies publishes its own accessibility plan. The DFE's statutory advice document² (2014) makes it very clear that **schools continue to have a duty to produce an Access Plan** which must be implemented.

Our Academy plans reflect their intentions in three areas to:

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

4 Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

In this policy, 'special educational needs' refers to a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision.

The SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 Years³ (DfE, 2014 updated 2015) says children have a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools or post-16 institutions; and
- are under compulsory school age and are likely to fall within either of the definitions above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

5 Definition of special educational provision

For children aged two years or older, this is educational provision additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision normally available to students of the same age.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-policies-for-schools>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25#history>

Within our individual Academy plans:

- For each aspect there are targets and actions
- Success criteria are included
- The timescale for completion is indicated
- Resource implications are costed.
- Systems of evaluation and monitoring are included
- Training needs are identified (related to targets).

Our Academies have produced their accessibility plans in line with the Trust's special educational needs policy with the aim of ensuring that our Academies are socially and academically inclusive, that all students have access to a full curriculum, and that all students are appropriately challenged.

Our **special educational needs policy** outlines the school's provision for supporting students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and the school's **publication of equality information and objectives** explains how we ensure equal opportunities for all our students, increased access to the curriculum, physical access to the school and access to information particular to students with SEND. This individual accessibility plans provide an outline of how the Academy will manage this part of the SEND provision.

6 Academy Accessibility Plans;

Academy	Page Number	Approved date	Review Date
Barbara Priestman Academy Accessibility Plan	6-7	March 2017	March 2018
Portland Academy Accessibility Plan	8-10	March 2017	March 2018
Ashtrees Academy	11-12	March 2017	March 2018
The New Bridge Academy	13-16	March 2017	March 2018
Hope Wood Academy	17-19	March 2017	March 2018

The Accessibility Plans for each Academy within the Trust are reviewed each term by the named academy and each year by Ascent Academies' Trust.



Barbara Priestman Academy
Accessibility Plan



Action	Timescale	Cost	Responsible	Success Criteria
<p>To refurbish the entrance reception area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to establish a more calm space for parents to wait in. • to create a more calm place for students to wait in. • to create a pleasant place where stakeholders can wait in. 	Easter 2017	£5,000	CD/ML	Parents, carers, students and stakeholders are able to access the entrance to the school that is pleasant and calm creating an atmosphere of belonging and contributing to healthy minds.
<p>To develop the refecton and calm room.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure that it is a safe place for students and staff • to ensure that both rooms play a therapeutic role in contributing to help students; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ feel calm ○ feel safe ○ feel supported • Contribute towards students wellbeing by enabling them to manage their own behaviour 	Easter 2017	£5,000	DM/ML	Students will have a safe place to go to when they feel under pressure or in crisis so that they can manage their own behaviour and begin to learn how to make the right choices by taking advice and support from staff.
<p>To develop a therapeutic space within the caretaker's old house that is designed and fitted out specifically to meet the needs of students with ASC.</p>	End of 2017	£20,000	DM/ML	Students with ASC will be able to access a bespoke and purposeful environment that will help develop their understanding of the world around them.
<p>To establish level paths within forest school to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable easier access for students with motor difficulties 	Autumn 2018	Volunteering groups	DA	Students and adults will benefit from level paths so that Forest School can be accessed safely and will provide

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure a safer surface for all of its users including adults 				students who are not confident on their feet more independence.
<p>To establish a separate student entrance and common room area at the front of the academy allowing students to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a sense of belonging provide greater independence promote safeguarding and student wellbeing providing a social space further developing the academy community. 	Spring 2019	£50,000	ML	Students are able to access their own space at the front of the school which will contribute to the ethos of the school and provide students with a sense of belonging, social space and will promote independence.
<p>To review, assess and alter the accessibility plan through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation with relevant parties, accordingly collate any information gathered from school visitors, parents, staff, students review and modify as required 	Termly	None	SLT	Continuous development of the plan.



Portland Academy
Accessibility Plan



Action	Timescale	Cost	Responsible	Success Criteria
<p>To establish individual inclusion plans for students in SED, to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that equality of access is consistent across the school in the following areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ accessibility within the curriculum ○ accessibility on site ○ accessibility on trips including residential experiences ○ attending the academy 	Easter 2017	None	ES	All students at Portland Academy will have appropriate and consistent access to Portland Academy that meets the needs of each individual.
<p>To ensure that displays and pictures around the academy are inclusive of all disabilities and cultures and are not stereotypical, thus providing;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sense of belonging for all • a celebration of achievement and success for all • a sharing of social, moral and cultural values for all 	Easter 2017	£1000	KH	All students will have an ongoing sense of belonging at Portland Academy where all feel valued and are able to express themselves through their work which is celebrated and where success is acknowledged.
<p>To develop a speech and language therapeutic room in 16-19 to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further develop the work of the speech and language therapist • provide students with a safe place to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ discuss their needs ○ develop shared strategies for individuals 	Dec 2019	£10,000	SC	Portland Academy will have a bespoke place where SALT can carry out their work and where students feel safe in the knowledge that their own needs are being met consistently and that strategies and progress are being made.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ carry out assessments, monitor and review to ensure expected progress is being made 				
<p>To update the pool plant to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose, providing;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swimming lessons for students attending the academy • swimming lessons for children beyond the school day for Portland Academy students and the community • therapeutic, including hydrotherapy sessions for identified individuals across Ascent Academies' Trust 	Dec 2018	£50,000	ML	All students at Portland will access the swimming pool for lessons and therapeutic sessions as part of the curriculum and individual EHC Plans. Students at Portland Academy and the community will access the pool at the end of the school day in after school clubs and swimming lessons. Students with identified needs (EHC Plans) across the trust will access the pool for therapeutic sessions, such as hydrotherapy.
<p>To upgrade current lighting to ensure that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it meets the specific needs of ASD students 	Dec 2018	£100/fitting Grant	SC/ML	Lighting fitted and is meeting the needs of students with ASD
<p>To purchase furniture that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is built for resilience and strength to meet the needs for those with challenging behaviour. (Tough furniture) 	April 2017	£8,000	SC	All students will benefit from additional furniture that is sturdy for sustainable use.
<p>To replace the current flooring across school and re decorate to provide;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more accessible classrooms • calming environments • Promoting wellbeing through self-worth and sense of belonging (SMSC) • providing students and staff ownership of their own spaces (SMSC) 	Dec 2018	£24,000	ML/GJ/SC	All students and staff will benefit from having their classrooms refurbished (floors and redecorating) creating a positive environment for learning, further embedding a sense of belonging and supporting wellbeing for all (SMSC).

<p>To review, assess and alter the accessibility plan through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultation with relevant parties, accordingly • collate any information gathered from school visitors, parents, staff, students • review and modify as required 	Termly	None	SLT	Continuous development of the plan.
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Ashtrees Academy
Accessibility Plan



Action	Timescale	Cost	Responsible	Success Criteria
<p>To further develop/improve the building to increase accessibility by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring perimeter fencing of EYFS provision to allow access to secure outdoor provision refurbishing and develop student changing areas in central area of school securing funding bid in order to refurbish and develop student changing areas across school 	<p>Autumn 2016</p> <p>Autumn 2016</p> <p>Spring 2017</p>	<p>£500</p> <p>£78000</p> <p>£100000</p>	<p>WC</p> <p>YL</p> <p>WC/AH</p>	<p>EYFS is compliant with regulations. To create clean dignified facilities to promote independence and high quality self-care.</p> <p>Bid secured to facilitate the creation of clean dignified facilities to promote independence and high quality self-care.</p>
<p>To support the learning needs of the students we will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support sensory issues, through the employment of an OT to provide necessary programmes support additional communication needs through the employment of an Makaton champion support the behavioural needs of the students through additional staffing, a positive behaviour support lead support the needs of students with ASC through NAS Accreditation and supporting action plan 	<p>Autumn 2016</p> <p>Autumn 2016</p> <p>Autumn 2016</p> <p>Spring 2017</p>	<p>£24000</p> <p>£200 Query cost</p> <p>£10000</p> <p>£2000</p>	<p>WC</p> <p>KM KM</p> <p>AM</p>	<p>Sensory programmes in place to allow access to learning (with two days' worth of OT time in the academy) Makaton developed and in place to allow access to learning. Behavioural support in place to allow access to learning. Students access high quality provision adapted to suit their individual needs.</p>
<p>To support the physical needs of the students we will;</p>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • train additional staff members in manual handling • secure MOVE accreditation • to train additional staff members of staff to supervise in the hydro-therapy pool • employ and train staff members to help support medical needs within the classroom 	<p>Autumn 2017</p> <p>Summer 2019</p> <p>Spring 2018</p> <p>Spring 2017</p>	<p>£1300</p> <p>£1500</p> <p>£500</p> <p>£1500</p>	<p>GM</p> <p>AP</p> <p>GM</p> <p>GM</p>	<p>Students supported with the physical needs.</p> <p>High quality provision for students physical needs.</p> <p>To allow more access to hydro-therapy for students during the course of the school week.</p> <p>Students supported with the medical needs.</p>
<p>To ensure the school is accessible through consultation by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continued use of parental and student questionnaires • distributing survey at end of each year. Revise the questions, Publish results as appendix to newsletter • consulting with other stakeholders including parents, students and staff to ensure that we provide the best possible service to any disabled parties 	<p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Termly</p>	<p>£400</p>	<p>WC</p> <p>YL</p> <p>WC</p>	<p>Parents and students to complete questionnaires.</p> <p>Info to be published.</p> <p>Areas identified by users for development / improvement.</p>
<p>To review, assess and alter the accessibility plan through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultation with relevant parties, accordingly • collate any information gathered from school visitors, parents, staff, students • review and modify as required 	<p>Termly</p>		<p>WC</p>	<p>Continuous development of the plan.</p>



The New Bridge Academy

Accessibility Plan



Action	Timescale	Cost	Responsible	Success Criteria
<p>Improving the curriculum access to The New Bridge Academy</p> <p>Continue development of the range of vocational courses available to students by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better prepare the students of The New Bridge Academy for the demands of the working environment 	Ongoing	Costs absorbed internally (SLT time, etc)	ADo	Students leaving The New Bridge Academy are better prepared and much more able to access post 16 provision with college and training providers Improved opportunities and outcomes for students leaving The New Bridge Academy at the end of year 11.
<p>Continue to improve links with post 16 providers to enhance opportunities of school leavers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated member of staff working with students and parents / carers to secure appropriate post 16 provision • Students invited to hold talks with and visit a range of 16 plus providers • The New Bridge Academy continues to offer / provide behaviour management training to staff of 16 plus providers 	Ongoing	Dedicated member of staff to assist students in planning their future and to monitor progress (£18000)	ADo DRy	Staff of post 16 providers are much more able to manage the challenging behaviour of SEMH students. Larger numbers of The New Bridge Academy students are able to access and succeed in post 16 provision.

		Staff time to deliver behaviour management training to a range of post 16 providers, if appropriate (£450)		
<p>Improving the physical access to The New Bridge Academy</p> <p>Continually improve signage within the academy building and improve the position of signage currently in the academy</p>	Ongoing	Cost of new / additional signage (£300 max-tactile and braille signs)	MWo/ACu	<p>The academy environment is easily accessible to students and visitors.</p> <p>Review, annually, the signage in the academy environment.</p> <p>All areas of the academy have suitable signage which can be easily seen by students and visitors.</p>
<p>Improving the delivery of written information in The New Bridge Academy</p> <p>Carry out survey of parent / carer of new intake of students, on an annual basis, to discover which alternative formats may be required for the production of academy information;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff to question parents / carers of new students on initial home visits as to their chosen format for academy information 	Ongoing	Staff time to report requirements of alternative formats to SLT so that enquires and arrangements can be made to provide said formats	MK	Parents / carer can access all academy information in their chosen format.

		(minimal-feedback following home visits?)		
<p>The availability of written materials in alternative formats;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the academy will make itself aware of services available within Sunderland for converting written information into alternative formats 	Ongoing	Staff time to make enquiries and carry out investigations (Minimal-part of admin support role)	MK	<p>Improved delivery of information to students with SEN/LDD when required.</p> <p>The academy will be able to provide written information in a range of formats when required for individual purposes.</p>
<p>Make available academy brochures, newsletter and other information for parents / carers in alternative formats as and when appropriate;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all academy information is available and accessible in different formats for those who require it review all academy publications and promote this availability in different formats for those who require it as and when appropriate 	Ongoing	Staff time and additional cost (Minimal-part of admin support role-never been needed to date)	MK	Improved delivery of academy information to parents / carer and the local community.
<p>Improve the delivery of written information for all user groups taking into account disabilities and preferred formats as and when appropriate;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek views of parents / carer and students on their preferred methods of 	Ongoing	(Minimal-part of role of	MK	Improved delivery of information within the academy.

<p>communication and provide suitable alternative forms of information as and when required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> include in parent / carer and student questionnaires during initial home visits upon student's entry into The New Bridge Academy 		<p>personal tutor- no additional costs)</p>		<p>The New Bridge Academy is aware of the needs of all user groups with regard to communication.</p>
<p>Staff training to raise awareness of the problems that parents / carers and students may have with written information e.g. scotopic sensitivity, dyslexia etc;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> include sessions within staff development programme staff aware of different strategies they can use to assist parents / carers and students in accessing written information 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Cost of training (£500)</p>	<p>DRO</p>	<p>Staff are more effective in meeting the needs of parents / carers and students.</p>
<p>To review, assess and alter the accessibility plan through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation with relevant parties, accordingly. collate any information gathered from school visitors, parents, staff, students review and modify as required. 	<p>Termly</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>SLT</p>	<p>Continuous development of the plan.</p>



Hope Wood Academy
Accessibility Plan



Action	Timescale	Cost	Responsibility	Success Criteria
<p>To further develop / improve the Hope Wood Academy site including buildings to increase accessibility by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide security access on front gates to allow access into the secure site • to add ramps / steps within the play areas to develop motor skills for students with coordination difficulties • to add automated doors to all external doors • to replace the door and door stencil in zone 1 of the school to provide suitable access to all students • to refurbish the student toilets across the school to provide appropriate flowing and facilities 	<p>Summer 2016</p> <p>2016-17</p> <p>Autumn 2016</p> <p>Spring 2017</p>	<p>£100</p> <p>£1000</p> <p>£2500</p> <p>£20000</p>	<p>BB</p> <p>BB</p> <p>BB</p> <p>BB</p> <p>AH</p>	<p>Students and visitors to have secure access to the site. All areas of the school accessible.</p> <p>Ease of access for all.</p> <p>Ease of access to the building and main corridor used by all age groups.</p> <p>Safe and accessible environment for all students.</p>
<p>To support the learning needs of the students by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting sensory issues, through the employment of an Occupational Therapist (OT) to provide necessary programmes 	<p>Autumn 2016</p>	<p>£19000</p>	<p>AP</p>	<p>Sensory programmes in place to allow access to learning.</p> <p>AAC developed and in place to allow access to learning.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting additional communication needs through the employment and allocation of an AAC champion • supporting the behavioural needs of all students through additional staffing, a positive behaviour support team and Trust supervision • developing skills for the hearing impaired and visually impaired through support from the associated services and additional staff training. 	Autumn 2016	£18000	RI	Behavioural support in place to allow access to learning.
	Spring 2017	£18000	AP	Additional external support in place to allow access to learning, with additional from own staffing.
	Autumn 2016	£10000	AP	
<p>To support the physical needs of the students by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training additional staff members in manual handling • employing and training staff members to help support medical needs within the classroom • timetable in use of a hydro pool for identified groups of students • supporting physical movement programmes with a trained physiotherapist 	Autumn 2016	£1000	RI	Students supported with the physical needs.
	Autumn 2016	£1000	RI	Students supported with the medical needs.
	Autumn 2016	£2000	RI	Identified students (EHC Plans) are time tabled to use the hydro pool.
	Autumn 2016	£1000	LD	Physio programmes are created and accessed by students.

<p>To ensure the school is accessible through consultation by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue use of parental and student questionnaires • distribute survey at end of each year. Revise the questions, publish results as appendix to newsletter • consult with other interested parties and users of the school to ensure that we provide the best possible service to any disabled parties • identify persons to consult, include link users from our Specialist School communities • take part in LA level special school forums and working parties 	<p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p>	<p>£400</p>	<p>AP</p> <p>AP</p> <p>RI</p> <p>RI</p> <p>RI</p>	<p>Parents and students to complete questionnaires.</p> <p>Information to be published. Areas identified by users for development / improvement.</p> <p>Positive links between the LA and Hope Wood Academy are developed and sustained.</p>
<p>To review, assess and alter the accessibility plan through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultation with relevant parties, accordingly • collate any information gathered from school visitors, parents, staff, students • review and modify as required 	<p>Termly</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>SLT</p>	<p>Continuous development of the plan.</p>