

## Liberty Academy Trust Accessibility in Schools Policy

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## Introduction

Vanguard School (“the school”) has a duty to plan increased accessibility to the curriculum, the physical environment of the school and improve the delivery of written information to disabled pupil/students. This policy outlines Liberty Academy Trust schools’ approach to this duty.

Improving access to education and educational achievement by disabled pupil/students is essential to ensuring equality of opportunity, and full participation in society. This needs to be in a planned and strategic way.

All autistic pupils are considered to have a disability as a consequence of their autism. The Equality Act 2010 emphasises the requirements for all schools to promote accessibility for those pupil/students with physical and sensory disabilities. Liberty Academy Trust accepts and endorses these intentions and therefore for the purpose of this policy document pupil/students with a disability will mean those who have physical and/or sensory impairments in addition to their core autistic disorder.

The SPELL Framework emphasises structure, positive approaches, empathy, low arousal and links for understanding and responding to the needs of people with an autistic spectrum disorder. Using SPELL small alterations to the physical environment and teaching approaches can vastly increase the capacity and accessibility for children with autism or related disorders to learn more effectively.

For autistic pupils seemingly, incidental environmental factors will greatly increase stress levels, potentially leading to challenging behaviour and reducing their opportunity for learning. Consequently, buildings will be audited in line with SPELL to ensure acoustics, lighting, smells, signage and classroom organisation are calm and ordered in such a way to reduce anxiety and aid concentration.

In accessing the curriculum autistic pupils including those with additional sensory and/or physical disabilities will have full access to all areas, provided at a suitable level and differentiated according to need. All staff will be trained in autism and positive behaviour support.

All schools have written three-year accessibility plans in place that form part of the annual School Improvement Plan. These plans focus on:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services and;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of written information which is provided to pupils who are not disabled.

## Operational delivery (Accessibility in Schools – Procedure)

1. Accessibility plans are reviewed regularly. Each school must have a locally produced accessibility plan that at least meets the requirements of Part 3 of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
2. Plans will assess current accessibility to the school and curriculum, and identify barriers to access or inclusion. A review of access should cover the physical environment, the provision of auxiliary aids and services, teaching and learning practices, the curriculum, staff training, the culture and ethos of the school and the provision of written information. Data on current and likely pupil/student population will also be considered.
3. Measures to eliminate barriers will be written into the plan and include staff training, teaching and learning practices, refurbishment and maintenance, minor and major capital expenditure. These will be prioritised into short, medium and long-term aims with clear implementation arrangements and time frameworks.
4. All new school buildings will comply with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and part five of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014.
5. Plans will be developed through:
  - 5.1 Access audit and review of current activities
  - 5.2 Identifying and devising actions
  - 5.3 Setting of goals and targets which are measurable
  - 5.4 Consultation with staff, parents and carers, pupils and other bodies
  - 5.5 Publication of the plan
  - 5.6 Implementation and allocation of adequate resources
  - 5.7 Evaluation
6. Accessibility should be considered in the purchasing of all resources. For example, the installation of bar taps in science, food and art rooms, and low pile high density carpet to assist wheelchair users.

Plans will include three areas:

### **Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum**

- This should not only cover teaching and learning but the wider curriculum such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities or school visits.
- Schools will use a variety of approaches when planning and delivering the curriculum to draw upon the different strengths and aptitudes of pupils. This might include using flexible grouping arrangements where pupils with disabilities can work with their peers, and encouraging peer support.
- Access should be considered at a 'whole school' level.

### **Improving the physical environment of the schools (and where appropriate residential units).**

- This will include steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, heating, ventilation, lifts, signs, interior surfaces, floor coverings, room décor and furniture. Improvements to physical access may include – ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops, well designed room acoustics and way-finding systems.
- Physical aids to access education might include ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, switches, photocopying enlargement facilities, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils. These lists are not exhaustive.

### **Improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils**

- Information should take into account pupils' disabilities, pupils' and parents' and carers' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable time frame. Examples include handouts, timetables and information about school events. Alternative formats will be used such as large print, pictorially, a recognised symbol system, Braille, by use of ICT, providing the information orally, lip speaking, sign language or other appropriate means.

### **7. Staff Training**

7.1 It is recognised that there is a need to ensure that skills are more specifically developed to enable teachers to provide effectively for pupils with a range of disabilities. Staff training and development will take place to ensure that curriculum access is further enhanced.

7.2 Examples of training which may be sought by and provided to teachers include:

- ensuring access to text and supporting delivery of information in the three main areas of impairment (physical, hearing and visual), including through the use of different media
- differentiation and / or scaffolding
- developing ICT-based resources / templates which can provide a basis for effective information delivery (in both the curriculum and organisational/administrative aspects). Training will be provided on new ICT equipment to allow teachers to use special features to make teaching / resources more accessible to pupils with SEND.

#### **Roles and responsibilities**

The Principal, along with all staff and governors are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Principal in consultation with staff, pupils, students, parents and carers and any other relevant party will review and revise the Accessibility plan.

#### **Evaluation of policy**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years with regard to its effectiveness and to ensure it takes account of current legislation.

## Vanguard School Accessibility Plan 2023-2028 Improving Curriculum Access

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME	ACHIEVEMENT
To develop a CPD programme to ensure staff are knowledgeable in terms of the needs of pupils and strategies to support them	Staff training requirements identified (Performance Management) Training booked to address needs	All teachers fully meet the requirements of disabled children's needs with regards to accessing the curriculum Monitored by Principal	Continuous	Increased access to an appropriate curriculum for all pupils
All enrichment activities are planned to ensure the participation of the whole range of pupils	Review of provision	All enrichment activities will be conducted in an inclusive environment and if external providers are used they will comply with all current and future legislative requirements	Continuous	Vanguard pupils are able to access a whole range of enrichment Activities
To ensure classrooms are optimally organised to promote the participation and independence of all pupils	Review and implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process in individual class bases	Lessons start on time without the need to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of individual pupils Monitored by Principal	Continuous	More time is available for pupils to participate in curriculum activities
Training for Governors in terms of Raising Awareness of Disability Issues	Provide training for governors	Whole school community aware of issues relating to access	Continuous	Vanguard will be a more inclusive school and social environment

To deploy Learning Mentors effectively to support pupils' participation	<p>Review needs of pupils within each class and staff accordingly</p> <p>Ensure staff skills are matched to pupil needs</p>	<p>Pupils needs are appropriately met through effective deployment of skilled support staff</p> <p>Monitored by Deputy Principal</p>	Continuous	All pupils are supported to achieve their full potential
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### **Vanguard School Accessibility Plan 2023-2028      Improving Curriculum Access**

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME	ACHIEVEMENT
Availability of written material in alternative formats	The school will make itself aware of the services available for converting written information into alternative formats.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes such as the use of symbols, how to best communicate in print i.e. large print or through augmentative communication technology and contrasting colours.	Continuous	Delivery of information to disabled pupils and parents improved
Make available school brochures, school newsletters and other information for parents in alternative formats	Review all current school publications and promote the availability in different formats for those that require it	All school information available for all through hard copy and website	Continuous	Delivery of school information to parents and the local community improved

<p>Raise the awareness of adults working at and for school on the importance of using a range of communications systems according to individual needs. E.g. CENMAC software</p>	<p>Advice from SALT</p> <p>On-going Performance Management arrangements. Training on range of issues such as functional use of language and managing SALT plans</p> <p>Other training as required</p>	<p>Awareness of target group raised</p>	<p>As required</p>	<p>School is more effective in meeting the needs of pupils</p>
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