Accessibility Plan

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INTRODUCTION

1.1

This plan is to address the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to further the aims of the vision statement by 'continuing to improve all aspects of the physical environment of the Academy site and other resources so that all disabled students can take full advantage of the education and associated opportunities provided by the Academy.

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

1.2

'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'.

2. PLAN OBJECTIVE

To create an environment which enables disabled students to participate fully in the Academy community by identifying and eliminating barriers that prevent this.

3. SCOPE

The framework provides a consistent outline for all Meridian Trust Academies to follow to create their own Accessibility Plan.

4. EQUALITY ACT 2010

4.1 The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of an Academy to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a student or potential student in:

- relation to admissions
- the way it provides education for its students
- the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility or service
- excluding a student, or subjecting them to any other detriment.

4.2 The protected characteristics are:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

5.1 When performing their duties all staff and academy councillors will have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and Equality Act (2010).

5.2 Compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) is central to all Academy policies and procedures.

5.3 Every student has an entitlement to the best education they can receive regardless of any disability they might have.

5.4 Any student attending a MERIDIAN TRUST Academy will have access to all available opportunities including extra-curricular activities, events and Academy trips.

5.5 The Academy provides all students with a broad and balanced curriculum in order to meet individual learning requirements.

5.6 The Academy recognises and values parents' and carers' understanding of their child's disability and will work closely with them in order to ensure the child can have access to maximum opportunities within the Academy.

5.7 The Academy recognises parents', carers' and the child's right to confidentiality.

6. ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
1	To continue to improve the physical environment to enable better access for students with disability. Further DDA (Disability discrimination Act 2005) installations.	Review of furnishings, classroom layouts and timetables to ensure full access for all. Submission of bids to secure DDA funding Ensure EVAC chairs are in good working order and all staff are trained in their use	Annually	SENDCO Health and Safety Estates and Facilities SENDCo Site Manager Site Manager	All students can access a full timetable and appropriate teaching spaces.
2	Review, maintain and service all DDA installations.	Daily checks of automated doors and ramps around site. Disabled facilities to be checked daily and serviced annually.	Daily site checks Annual	Site manager Site manager	All DDA installations are working effectively and enabling access. Equipment if certified
3	The Academy is aware of the access needs of disabled children, staff and parent/carers	Each student that is physically disabled has a (PEEP) Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan that is updated yearly or if a change occurs in their condition/disability. Undertake confidential survey of all staff and Academy Councillors to ascertain access needs. Review & update furnishings, classroom layouts and timetables to ensure full access for all. Invite Physiotherapists in for review to advise for our students who use this service Implement advice from previous school with regard toileting needs	Annually As recruited As required	SENDCO HR/Site Manager SENDCO	All PEEPs in place for disabled students and all staff aware of all students' access needs Ensure the access needs of all adults regularly on site are met All stakeholders able to access fully all Academy activities.

		Review environment with all parents and pupils at EHCP annual reviews and other SEN reviews or TAC meetings			
4	All Academy staff are trained on access issues	Provide up to date information and training on disability equality for all staff. All contractors conducting repairs and maintenance must abide with Health and Safety and access standards.	Annually Ongoing	SENDCO Site Manager Health and Safety Officer	Raised confidence of staff and governors in commitment to meet access needs. All contractors accessing the site follow Health and safety and access standards

5	Improve signage and visibility for visually impaired people around the site.	Site survey to establish coverage of external lighting Replace external lighting that is insufficient Replace bulbs immediately when blown. Ensure signage is clear and appropriate Site survey to identify trip hazards/uneven surface/ staircase edges/changes in height etc are clearly marked and where needed renewed/replaced Site survey to identify where lighting may be turned off causing hazard and amend to tamper proof	Ongoing Ongoing Review Ongoing Ongoing	Caretaker/Site Manager Site Manager Site Manager Site manager	Visually impaired people feel safe in the grounds. Access around the site easier for all. Visibility of trip hazards Safeguarding
6	Ensure all paths, ramps and communal areas are free of foliage, overgrowth and fallen leaves. Review, maintain and service lift	Site team to complete weekly checks to ensure the site is free of obstructions. Regular checks of lifts on site. Service of lifts	Weekly Check As required	Site manager External contract SENDCo and TAs	Students have free and easy access of all paths and communal areas. All lifts are working effectively and enabling access.

		Ensure students have a lift pass if needed or have support of an adult who has one			Students can use lifts to access lessons
7	Ensure that all students and visitors with a disability can be safely evacuated	Put in place Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for all disabled students (PEEP). Review evacuation Procedures to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities. All Fire Marshals have up to date training.	Annually Annually Biannually	SENDCO Fire Marshals Site Manager & KHA Principal	All disabled students and staff working with them are safe and confident in event of fire (or other situations where evacuation is deemed necessary).
8	Appropriate and sufficient parking for students and visitors with disability	Review of use of disabled parking by non-disabled visitors/staff	Ongoing	Principal & Site Manager	Use of parking for disability vehicles with appropriate access to all students and visitors.
9	Ensure all Fire Escape routes are suitable for all students	Request advice from the fire service on accessibility of exit routes and fire doors, particularly for wheelchairs PEEPS stipulate who is responsible for the evacuation of disabled students from each classroom	Ongoing	Site Manager SENDCO	All staff, students and visitors (including disabled) able to have safe independent escape in emergency situations. Ongoing work improvements Ensure all Academy staff are aware of their responsibilities.
10	Disabled toilets maintained and reviewed to ensure access for all within 40 metres of any classroom	Weekly checks and amendments noted	Ongoing	Site Manager	Disabled toilet access available throughout Academy adapted to meet needs of individuals as needed
11	Ensure that the edges of all steps in the Academy are visible and safe	Paint/yellow and white strip and then maintain the quality and cleanliness on edges of steps.	Annually	Site Manager	All steps are visible to all members of the Academy. All staircase top and bottom steps are clear with coloured strips. Uneven surface changes are identified with a yellow edge Implementing an ongoing plan of action to check and refresh 6 monthly

ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
1	Ensure all Student Support Assistants (SSAs) have continued specific training on appropriate disability issues	Use staff audit to identify SSA needs relating to disability issues. Arrange appropriate training for SSAs.	Annually	SENDCO	Raised level of awareness of students with disability ensuring curriculum suits students' requirements.
2	Ensure all staff are aware of disabled students' curriculum access	All disabled students have a PEEP (to be reviewed annually). Training for all staff on specific curriculum requirements for disabled students.	Annually	SENDCO	All staff aware of individual student's access needs. All staff informed of requirement on a regular basis.
3	Increase confidence of teaching (and support) staff in differentiating/adapting the curriculum	Training on differentiation/adaptation to be given to all staff. Audit staff training needs on curriculum access.	Annual CPD	SENDCO KML	Raised confidence of staff in use of differentiated/adapted techniques, enabling increased student participation. Improved staff understanding of potential barriers to learning.
4	Ensure all staff are aware of and able to use relevant software and resources	Whole school access to online reading software. Access to speech to text software Access to ICT and reading pens Run training sessions on use of relevant software.	Ongoing	SENDCO IT Services	Wider use of SENDCO resources in mainstream classes and throughout the Academy.
5	Enable disabled students to have full access to extra-curricular activities and Academy trips	Discussion with lead staff of extracurricular activities, trips and residential visits. Identify potential areas of difficulty Organise additional activities for disabled students. Develop guidance for staff on making trips and activities fully accessible.	Ongoing	SENDCO SFO	All students in Academy able to access all activities, receiving full educational entitlement.

6	Review all curriculum areas to include disability issues	Include specific reference to disability equality in all curriculum reviews. Make all staff aware of disability equality through staff training.	Ongoing	Vice Principal MPE SENDCO	All students are aware of the challenges and equality related to disability.
7	Continue to review PE curriculum to ensure disabled students continue to have access to physical education	Ensure there is PE provision within the Academy. Use of Support Worker to deliver physiotherapy as part of the PE curriculum where possible	Ongoing	CAL PE SENDCO Support worker/specialist	All students able to access physical activities.

7. IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
1	Review information shared with parents and carers to ensure it is accessible	Ask parents and carers about access needs when student is admitted to Academy and review regularly. Ensure all letters home are accessible in line with SENDIASS guidelines. Produce information in a format which they can access.	Ongoing	Vice Principal & SENDCO	All parents and carers receiving Academy information in a format they can access. SENDIASS link on website
2	To provide written information to students in an appropriate format.	Continue to develop methods of presenting information for visually impaired students when they are admitted to the Academy, in discussion with parents and carers.	Ongoing - reviews annually	SENDCO Senior Tutors/CALs	All students can access written information appropriately.

4	Include discussion of access information in all annual reviews of SEND needs	Ensure preferred method of communication is used. Develop strategies through EHCP. Deliver strategies to all staff through training.	Annually	SENDCO	To ensure all students can access the curriculum. To ensure all staff are aware of the relevant strategies and how to implement them.
5	Produce accessibility information to increase support for parents and carers of disabled students	Establish with parents and carers a SEND information point of contact	Review Annually	SENDCO	To ensure all parents and carers are aware of how the Academy will ensure full accessibility within the Academy.

9. PARENTAL GUIDANCE

9.1 Academies must not discriminate against disabled students for a reason relating to their disability. They should promote the inclusion of disabled students in their admission arrangements and in all aspects of Academy life.

Accessibility Plans and 'Reasonable Adjustments'

Academies will vary widely in how accessible they are to individual disabled students. Parents and carers should check what improvements have been made and what is being planned when considering which Academy they would like their child to attend.

Every Academy must have an Accessibility Plan which shows how they intend to improve accessibility for disabled students. The plan must be published and you can ask to see it. It will outline how the Academy will:

- improve the physical environment
- make improvements in the provision of information
- increase access to the curriculum

Academies can also increase access for individual students by making 'reasonable adjustments'. These can be simple changes for instance, making sure lessons are on the ground floor if one of the students uses a wheelchair and the Academy does not have a lift.

They may also be able to offer assistance during assessments or exams, so that students are assessed fairly during their course.

You should always talk to the Academy to discuss what it can reasonably do to include your child.

Improvements to the Physical Environment

Changes to the physical environment that an Academy could make to increase access might include:

- lighting and paint schemes to help visually impaired children
- lifts and ramps to help physically impaired children
- carpeting and acoustic tiling of classrooms to help hearing impaired students

Improving the Way Information is Delivered to Disabled Students

Information that is normally provided in writing (such as handouts, timetables and textbooks) can be made more accessible by providing it:

- in Braille

- in large print
- via audio file
- using a symbol system

Increased Access to the Curriculum

Adjustments that would help disabled students have better access to the curriculum might include:

- changes to teaching and learning arrangements
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- support from other students

Assistive Technology

Technology suited to your child's needs can help them learn faster and more easily. This can increase their access to the curriculum. Examples of technology that can help include:

- touch-screen computers, joysticks and tracker balls
- easy-to-use keyboards
- interactive whiteboards
- text-to-speech software
- Braille-translation software
- software that connects words with pictures or symbols
- AV-1 Bots
- Computer readers (reader pens)

Some Academies may already have this kind of technology available, or may be planning to get it. Arrangements for distributing resources and funding for equipment vary throughout the UK. If your child has a statement of special educational needs (EHCP), the help on their statement must be provided. This may include special equipment.

Academy Transport

The same basic rules apply to all children. But LEAs can make a decision to provide transport on a case by case basis for a disabled child. Your LEA will assess your child's needs when making a decision, taking into account your child's health and/or disability and their age. If your child is offered Academy transport, the vehicle should have the relevant equipment to suit your child's needs - for example ramps or lifts. Most local councils also provide escorts on Academy transport if needed.

You may be able to get help with your own costs for taking your child to Academy. Your LEA will be able to tell you if this is possible.

Some LEAs have different transport policies concerning students going to special Academies.

If Your Child Cannot Attend School for Medical Reasons

If your child cannot attend the Academy because of health problems, your Local Authority is responsible to help them to continue their education. This could be achieved through home schooling, for example.