



Olney Middle School

Accessibility Plan and Equality Policy

September 2020

The policy is scheduled for review, as per the above date however if there are legal or statutory changes the policy will need to be reviewed

Author: G Young

Background

1.1 On 1 October 2012, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools.

1.2 The Act makes it unlawful for OMS and the school's governance committee, which is the responsible body of a school, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to:

- admissions;
- the way we provide education for pupils;
- the way we provide pupil's access to any benefit, facility or service
- by excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

This policy is written in conjunction with IFtL's Equality statement January 2017, and follows the vision of the trust that "At IFtL Trust Schools, we are relentlessly driven by our pursuit of excellence and high expectations of learning, behaviour and respect for every member of our community. We welcome the richness of diversity within our schools and our wider society, with equality for all being underpinned in all that we do".

1.3 The protected characteristics are:

- sex;
- race;
- disability;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity.

1.4 There is still a requirement to have an accessibility plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled pupils to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information.

1.5 The Equality Act applies to all schools in England and Wales. We are required to draw up equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This accessibility plan is reviewed every three years.

1.6 Any person, such as staff, in schools who act on behalf of OMS and any governance committee, are responsible for their own discriminatory actions and OMS is also liable unless it can prove that it has taken all reasonable

steps to stop the staff member from doing the discriminatory action, or from doing anything of that kind.

- 1.7 The school's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimize does not end when a pupil has left the school, but also relates to events afterwards such as the provision of references, or old pupil networks.

2.0 Disability Discrimination Act

- 2.1 The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act. There are some minor differences as follows:

- the definition of discrimination is less restrictive;
- direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified;
- failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified;
- from September 2012, we are under a duty to make available auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments, where these are not being supplied through a Statement of Special Educational Needs or from other sources.

3.0 Definition of Disability

- 3.1 The Act defines disability as *when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.*

- 3.2 Some specific conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV are considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.

- 3.3 Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least twelve months.

4.0 Reasonable adjustments

- 4.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

- 4.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.

- 4.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (ie. via a Statement or EHC plan), there should be no assumption that it must be

- provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.
- 4.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software.
- 4.5 Our SEN policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our school. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.
- 4.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision, eg. hearing aids.
- 4.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three-year accessibility plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.
- 4.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in school life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*. For example, if a field trip was planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the wheelchair user could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils.
- 5.0 Our Vision
- 5.1 OMS believes that every child has the right to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, loved, valued and respected, and to have high aspirations for their future.
- 5.2 Inclusion is the process of taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy school life.
- 6.0 Our Duty around Accessibility for Disabled Pupils
- 6.1 Our accessibility plan focuses on the following areas for implementation:

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- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

6.2 Our plan also includes the resource implications of implementing the Plan.

6.3 Our approach includes the following:

- access, audit and review (see Barriers to Learning Checklist – Appendix 1) (ie. the nature of the school's population, context, future pupil numbers, staff training needs, impact of anti-bullying strategies, timetabling, trips, medicines, clubs, outcomes for SEND in external exams, views of parents, pupils, voluntary sector, symbols, signage, font size etc);
- identify actions;
- set goals and targets;
- consult on the proposed plan;
- publicise the Plan;
- implementation; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan.

6.4 Our accessibility plan is outlined at Appendix 2.

7.0 Discrimination Claims

7.1 Claims for discrimination on the grounds of disability against out school must be heard by the First tier Tribunal (SENDIST) in England.

7.2 Such claims of discrimination or harassment which would be brought by a parent of a pupil against our school would be brought to the Tribunal by the parent. This must be brought within six months of the act to which the claim relates. Any remedy will not include compensation.

8.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 The named person in the school who is responsible for the Plan is Barbara Tate.

8.2 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the Plan is implemented and to ensure that it is fair and equal to all.

8.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor the success of the Plan by ensuring that the priority areas are addressed by them in the classroom,

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particularly with regard to the provision of information and curriculum access.

- 8.4 Our Accessibility Plan and any updates will be shared by Barbara Tate.
- 8.5 Progress reports are provided termly by Barbara Tate and reported to our Senior Leadership Team.
- 8.6 Any failure to meet target deadlines are reported to the governing body and thereafter reported by exception to UK Compliance Committee.
- 9.0 Other Associated Policies and Procedures:
 - Special Educational Needs;
 - Equality and Diversity;
 - Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff;
 - Safeguarding Children including Child Protection;
 - Health and Safety
 - Premises Management.

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IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS: A CHECKLIST

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Section 1 : How does your school deliver the curriculum?			
Questions	Yes	No	Info
Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?	X		
Are your classrooms optimally organized for disabled pupils?	X		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	X		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	X		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups & the whole class?	X		
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama & physical activities?	X		
Do staff recognize and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?	X		6ES
Do staff recognize and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?	X		Eg.SATS
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?	X		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?	X		
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	X		
Are there high expectation of all pupils?	X		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	X		
Section 2 : Is your School designed to meet the needs of all pupils?			

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Questions	Yes	No	Info
Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms; the assembly hall; canteen; library; gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities; playgrounds and common rooms – allow access for all pupils?	X	X	Limited access to the treehouse
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?	X	X	The treehouse is only accessible by stairs
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	X		
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?	X		
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?	X	X	Need braille stickers
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		X	
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	X		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?	X		Work needed in Hall
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted & located appropriately?	X		
Section 3 : How does your School deliver materials in other formats?			
Questions	Yes	No	Info
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?	X	X	Large print available.No Braille or audiotape
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities eg, by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?	X		

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Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	X		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	X		Eg.Hearing system available (Roger)

Appendix 2:

**OLNEY MIDDLE SCHOOL 2020
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

	Targets	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Success criteria
Short term (all plans may be impacted by Coronavirus restrictions)	Specific classrooms to be organised so that that they are made accessible for disabled pupils therefore the treehouse will not be needed	Review of use of treehouse to highlight issues and programme of adjustment to be drawn up to improve accessibility. See initial programme of improvements below annex 1 .	Classrooms are made more accessible	July 2021	Additional inspections and review to be undertaken to ensure that necessary adjustments have been made. Ensure actions are being or have been completed.
	Review of all school facilities to be undertaken and list of action drawn up to highlight areas with accessibility issues	See initial programme of improvements below. Annex 2	School is more accessible to visitors and pupils with accessibility needs	July 2021	Additional inspections and review to be undertaken to ensure that necessary adjustments have been made. Ensure actions are being or have been completed.
Medium term	Undertake physical improvements and refurbishment of school to aid pupils and visitors with accessibility issues	Programme of further improvements to school – see Annex 3 below	School is fully accessible to pupils and visitors with accessibility needs	By September 2021	All potential options investigated and acted upon

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Long term	School plans to improve designated areas over successive financial years	Planned use of capital. Please see annex 4 below	Further improvements to accessibility where necessary		
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Short term actions - accessibility of classrooms – Annex 1

Action	By who	Date	Completed	Comments
Stair lift to be fixed	N Morrow	1/10/20		
Update tablets across school to assist with use of white boards including implementation of chrome cast	B Tate	1/11/20		
Peg heights to be checked and possibility of adding new lower peg to Year 3 cloakroom	N Morrow	1/10/20		
Clearance of storage areas to increase further opportunities for pupils to use specific areas especially as linked from use of the house	N Morrow	1/10/20		

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Under the coronavirus restrictions consider the use of the sensory room and what alternative arrangements can be made	L Circuitt	1/10/20		
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Short term objectives – School access – Annex 2

Action	By who	Date	Completed	Comments
Disabled parking space to be remarked	N Morrow	1//11/20		
Pupils to be reminded of need to give disabled pupils space	Everyone	Ongoing		
Staff to be reminded of need to keep all corridors and classrooms clear of hazards	Everyone	Ongoing		
High visibility tape added to permanent hazards	N Morrow	Ongoing		
Braille stickers to be added to signs	L Circuitt	Ongoing as school develops the use of specific areas		
Signs to be in pictures as well as words	L Circuitt	Ongoing		

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Repaint high visibility paint on all banisters	N Morrow	Ongoing		Continual checks needed
Hazard tape on edge of stage in Hall	N Morrow	Ongoing as depends on apron stage		Updated as necessary
Publish and promote the Equality Policy amongst staff and parents	G Young L Circuit	Ongoing via newsletters and website		

Medium Term Objective 1 – refurbishment of school to aid pupils and visitors with accessibility needs – Annex 3
 This should also follow the asset management plan

Action	By who	Date	Completed	Comments
Retarmac playground, add brighter markings and reduce edging	G Young	December 2021		Ongoing due to budget aspects, however new larger area has been added by pond and section 106 applied for
Consider possibility of sound boards to	B Tate	August 2021		

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improve noise levels in Hall				
Consider renewing projectors in classroom to help visually impaired	B Tate	Ongoing		Ongoing as and when projectors need repairing
Consider arrangements for hard of hearing parents and use of induction loop	SLT	Ongoing		

Long Term Objective 1 – further improvements to school where necessary – Annex 4

Action	By who	Date	Completed	Comments
School implements a long term running programme of looking into areas for improving access to learning and accessibility	G Young	Ongoing		
School monitors and updates plan annually	Everyone	Ongoing		

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with view to constantly improving facilities subject to budget				
Ongoing programme of staff training in disability awareness	G Young	Ongoing		

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The most up to date version of this policy is available on the school website. If you are reading a hard copy of this policy please check the version on the school website