



# THAMES LEARNING TRUST

Name of Policy	Accessibility Statement
Scope of Policy	This statement applies to all Academies within The Thames Learning Trust
Approved by	Chief Executive Officer
Date of Approval	September 2020
Review period	Three Years
Review Date	September 2023

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER



# THAMES LEARNING TRUST

## 1. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty, sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty', that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies, and which extends to all protected characteristics – race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**
- **Advance equality of opportunity**
- **Foster good relations**

One of the specific duties for academies is to publish an Accessibility Plan. Academies need to update their published information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years.

## 2. Accessibility Plans

Academies are required to have Accessibility Plans showing how they are planning strategically to increase access over time; the same duties as previously existed under the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010.

The Thames Learning Trust Academies' Accessibility Plans set out the proposals of the Board of Trustees to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required under the Equality Act 2010. The three key duties are to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled children and young people can engage in the school **curriculum**.
- Improve the physical environment of the school to increase disabled pupils' **physical access** to education and extra-curricular activities.
- Improve the delivery of **information** to disabled children and young people, using formats which give better access to information.

The responsibility for the Accessibility Plan lies with the Board of Trustees and Principal of each school within the Trust.

Academies will need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must review them regularly.

Academies should remember to explain, for example:

- How the curriculum is differentiated and, at Key Stage 4, what alternative accreditation is offered
- How information for pupils, parents and the community is available in different formats, e.g. using Braille, larger font or reduced / simplified language.

- Plans to improve the signage in the buildings and grounds
- Arrangements that could be put in place if a disabled parent needed support to attend a school event, e.g. the availability of a signer for a parents' evening

The Equality Act requires “reasonable adjustments” and many adjustments are low cost or no cost: see Appendix A for a [Classroom Checklist](#).

See Appendix B for a [Model Accessibility Plan](#).

### **3. Implications for School Admissions**

All The Thames Learning Trust academies follow the Schools Admissions Code and their Local Authority admissions procedures. The School Admissions Code states: *All children whose statement of special educational needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan names the school must be admitted* (Section 1, para 1.6). The aim of local authorities is for children with disabilities who are starting school to have a place in a suitably accessible, nearby, primary school that feeds into an accessible secondary school. This will enable such pupils to have an agreed pathway for their education. To support this aim, it is the local authority's policy to prioritise disabled children in admissions.

The local authority identifies disabled children at the pre-school and transfer stages and uses this information to inform the allocation of their school places, in consultation with their parents.

Since September 2002 it has been against the law to discriminate in school admissions, education and associated services and exclusions. Parents have means of redress through admissions and exclusions appeals and Special Educational Needs and Disability tribunals which now sit in the Health, Education and Social Care (HESC) Chamber of the First-Tier Tribunal.

The Thames Learning Trust will regularly review its admission position to ensure that it is not discriminatory either in intention or effect.

### **4. Requirement to provide Auxiliary Aids**

From September 2012 academies have been required to provide auxiliary aids (and services) for disabled pupils to overcome any disadvantage experienced in academies. Advice on meeting this requirement can be found on pages 17-20 of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's [Reasonable Adjustments' Guidance](#).

### **5. Including children with medical needs**

In September 2014 a new duty came into force for governing bodies to ensure arrangements are in place in school to support pupils at school with medical conditions. The guidance includes statutory and non-statutory advice under the Children and Families Act 2014. The [statutory guidance](#) applies to all maintained academies, academies and free academies. For children with SEND, this guidance should be read in conjunction with the 2015 [SEND Code of Practice](#).

The new guidance document reiterates existing good practice and clarifies accountability.

Children and young people with medical conditions are entitled to a full education and have the same rights of admission to school as other children. This means that no child with a medical condition should be denied admission or prevented from taking up a place in school because arrangements for their medical condition have not been made. The Board of Trustees must ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure that such children can access and enjoy the same opportunities at the academy as any other child. The Board of Trustees should ensure academies develop a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions that is reviewed regularly and is readily accessible to parents and academy staff.

Although there is no requirement on teaching staff to administer medicines or undertake personal and health care procedures, The Board of Trustees is required to ensure there are arrangements in place, including ensuring sufficient members of support staff are appropriately trained to undertake these roles as part of their core job description.

## **6. Advice for The Thames Learning Trust academies on planning inclusive visits**

Equality legislation sets out a clear expectation that disabled children and young people should be given the same opportunities to participate as their peers. The Thames Learning Trust advises all of its academies to plan their educational visits and learning outside the classroom opportunities on the basis of assuming that ALL pupils will be able to take part.

It is important that academies involve parents, the pupil and, if appropriate, specialist support staff, as early as possible in the planning process, particularly when a residential stay is involved.

Under the Equality Act the school must make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage to their peers. This may include providing additional staffing and accessible transport or ensuring the venue is appropriate to the needs of the pupil concerned.

## **7. Links with other policies**

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Risk assessment policy
- Health and safety policy
- Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication
- Special educational needs (SEN) information report
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy

## Reasonable adjustments in the classroom: a check list

This is a list of practical classroom arrangements that teachers found useful in thinking of a range of adjustments they might want to make, rather than an exhaustive list.

<p><b>1. Pre-planning information.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you been given information on the nature and degree of impairment and the access needs of the disabled pupils in the class?</li> <li>• Have you been shown or do you know how these disabled pupils access needs and personal care needs will be met in the class?</li> <li>• If you don't know how the disabled pupils needs will/can be met seek advice from SENCO, Head of Department, Head or Deputy or from other agencies such as Educational Psychologists, Advisory Teacher or Health Professionals.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. What preparation have you made with the class/group for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ one to one peer support</li> <li>• collaborative teaming</li> <li>• group work</li> <li>• valuing difference of race, gender, ethnicity, disability or religion</li> <li>• How do you ensure that mutual respect is encouraged within your classroom? Are you clear about how to deal with bullying and harassment in the class?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Lesson planning: how will you support the needs of all learners? Consider:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- timing,</li> <li>- variation of activities,</li> <li>- types of activities [concrete/abstract],</li> <li>- reinforcement of key ideas,</li> <li>- extension work</li> <li>- recall of previous work, - links to future work, - clear instructions.</li> <li>• Will the content of the lesson engage all pupils from the beginning? Will there be sufficient variation in activities and pace to engage all?</li> <li>• Are you able to access specially adapted equipment for some students to enable them to participate fully?</li> <li>• If not, can an alternative way be found?</li> <li>• Will the diversified and differentiated work allow all pupils to experience success at their optimum level?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. What different teaching styles are you going to use?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual e.g. use photos, mind maps, maps and diagrams, pictures, film clips, wall displays?</li> <li>• Auditory e.g. use story telling, talking, effective questions, problem solving, clear sequencing, music, singing?</li> <li>• Kinaesthetic e.g. use movement, role play, artefacts, use the environment</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5. Prepared materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are written materials accessible to all: formats; readability; length; content?</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scaffolding [practical materials] e.g. writing frames, pictograms, sounds, pictures, objects, artefacts, word lists, number lines, etc, are they accessible to all? □</li> <li>Appropriate use of augmented communication and ICT</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>6. Self presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you thought about how you will: react to situations of stress, humour, seriousness, embarrassing questions; offer encouragement to all; challenge the behaviour not the child?</li> <li>Are all the students aware that you might approach the behaviour of some students in a different manner to the rest of the class?</li> <li>How will you use your voice in the lesson, eg: volume, tone, and make sure all children are understanding you?</li> <li>Where will you position yourself in the classroom and when?</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>7. Use of support staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you met with or at least communicated with support staff before the lesson?</li> <li>How are you going to use other adult support in the lesson?</li> <li><i>Does their use allow all children to be equally included in the class activities?</i></li> <li>If you are using support staff for withdrawal, how do you know the pupils are gaining from this?</li> <li>If you are using withdrawal, how are the groups organised?</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>8. Classroom organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is seating carefully planned and/or the activity accessible for pupils with: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mobility impairments e.g. circulation space, table height</li> <li>- hearing impairments e.g. sight line for lip reading/ interpreter/ no glare</li> <li>- visually impaired e.g. maximise residual sight, if touch can reach</li> <li>- pupils with challenging behaviour e.g. in adult gaze; at front for eye contact</li> <li>- pupils with short attention span/easily distracted, eg: sit on own</li> <li>- learning difficulties who need a lot of support, eg: next to peer supporter</li> <li>- short attention span, eg: distraction free zone □ What seating plans are you using and why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Will seating plans make use of peer support and how?</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>9. How will you organise and group pupils in lessons?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friendship groupings?</li> <li>Mixed sex/same sex groupings?</li> <li>Mixed ability/same ability groupings?</li> <li>Specific pairs of pupils working together, eg: stronger reader/weaker reader?</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>10. How will you deal with unexpected incidents?</b></p> <p>Are you aware of the systems for dealing with unexpected incidents, eg: evacuation, fainting or fits, incontinence, medical emergencies?</p>	
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<p><b>11. How will you ensure that all students feel equally valued through their experiences of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the allocation of teacher and support staff time;</li> <li>• being listened to/ paid attention to;</li> <li>• being respected;</li> <li>• achieving;</li> <li>• interacting with their peers.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>12. How will you assess the outcomes?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have a scheme for assessing the achievements of all?</li> <li>• Have you looked at alternative forms of assessment? e.g. video recording progress, peer evaluation, self evaluation?</li> <li>• How will you involve pupils in assessing their progress?</li> </ul>	

Appendix B

**The Thames Learning Trust  
Model School Accessibility Plan**

**Name of School**

**Date of Plan** *The plan should run for 4 years*

Aim	Current good practice	Objectives	Actions to be taken	Person Responsible	Date to be completed by	Success Criteria