



River Learning Trust

# **Accessibility**

## **Statement**

Person responsible for policy: Chief Executive

Revised: July 2016

Review Date: July 2017

## 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 schools is to publish an Accessibility Plan. Schools need to update their published information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years.

## Accessibility Plans

Schools 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.

River Learning Trust Schools' Accessibility Plans set out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school 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 Governing Body and Headteacher of each school within the Trust.

Schools will need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must review them regularly. An accessibility plan may be a freestanding document but may also be published as part of another document such as the School Development Plan, or a Single Equality Plan. OFSTED inspections may include a school's accessibility plan as part of their review.

Schools 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](#).

### **Implications for School Admissions**

All River Learning Trust schools follow the Schools Admissions Code and the Oxfordshire 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 Oxfordshire County Council is for children with disabilities who are starting school to have a place in a suitably accessible, nearby, primary school which 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 County Council’s policy to prioritise disabled children in admissions.

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

### **Requirement to provide Auxiliary Aids**

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

## **Including children with medical needs**

In September 2014 a new duty came into force for local 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 schools, academies and free schools. 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 local governing body must ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure that such children can access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child. Local governing bodies should ensure schools develop a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions that is reviewed regularly and is readily accessible to parents and school staff. This policy may be a separate policy or may be a sub-section included in the school's existing SEN & Disability policy.

Although there is no requirement on teaching staff to administer medicines or undertake personal and health care procedures, local governing bodies are 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.

### [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

River Learning Trust Schools may find the following web resource helpful, which includes model policies: [The medical conditions at school website](#)

## **Advice for River Learning Trust schools 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 River Learning Trust advises all of its schools 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 schools 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.

A list of [useful links](#) is available in Appendix C

## Appendix A

### 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?</b></p> <p>Consider:</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,</li><li>- links to future work,</li><li>- clear instructions.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><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><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>	

<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>	
<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>	
<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</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What seating plans are you using and why?</li> <li>• Will seating plans make use of peer support and how?</li> </ul>	
<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>	
<p><b>10. How will you deal with unexpected incidents?</b>  Are you aware of the systems for dealing with unexpected incidents, eg: evacuation, fainting or fits, incontinence, medical emergencies?</p>	
<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>	

**River Learning Trust  
Model School Accessibility Plan**

**Name of School**

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

Priority Success Criteria	Action to be taken	Lead Staff	Additional Resources, Budget	Milestones	Monitoring and evaluation summary
			<i>To be included within the budget plans for the year</i>		



## Appendix C

### Useful Links

[Abilitynet](#) gives free information and advice on any aspect of the use of a computer by someone with a disability.

[Action on Hearing Loss](#) runs a telephone/teletext helpline and also produces information leaflets and fact sheets.

[Arthritis Care](#) campaigns nationally, and also works through a network of local groups and centres offering support, advice and training. Information is available on their website and they represent the best source of information nationally on arthritis, its impact and on ways that colleges and centres may best be able to meet the requirements of learners with arthritis.

[Autism Oxford](#) brings together people who seek knowledge and understanding of the Autism Spectrum and autistic behaviour with those best able to impart it.

[British Deaf Association](#) is an organisation of Deaf people that represents the Deaf community.

[The British Dyslexia Association](#) offers advice, information and help to families, professionals and dyslexic individuals. It works to raise awareness and understanding of dyslexia, and to effect change. BDA provides a range of useful resources related to dyslexia.

[Broadbandsuppliers](#) is a site which collates valuable advice on online resources for disabled users.

[Foundation for people with learning disabilities](#) The Foundation provides information, resources and services and tries to influence government and local authority policies and services so that they better meet the needs people with learning disabilities.

[Gov.uk – disabled People](#) This part of the Gov.uk website has been designed to help people find out about their civil rights. It provides information on legislation that exists to help establish employees and employers.

[Diabetes UK](#) has a mass of information about diabetes that is of wider interest and would certainly be helpful to schools.

[Down's Syndrome Association](#) (DSA) provides information, advice and support to parents and individuals with Downs Syndrome. It also provides information and advice to professionals whose work requires an understanding of the condition.

[Dyslexia Action](#) (DA) is a charity that specialises in the assessment and teaching of people with dyslexia and is now the only national dyslexia teaching organisation in the world. It seeks ways to improve the effectiveness of teaching and also focuses on the development of teaching materials.

[Epilepsy Action](#) has developed a large website that includes basic information about the condition that will be useful to schools. The site also provides an index of reference material for those who wish to develop a more detailed understanding of epilepsy.

[The Equality Human Rights' Commission](#) (EHRC) is an independent body, established to eliminate the discrimination faced by disabled people and to promote equality of opportunity. The EHRC produces many useful guides and publications such as how to organise disability awareness/equality training and it has a fully accessible helpline.

[Mencap](#) is one of the major organisations for people with learning difficulties. Mencap has produced an education resource pack for those over 16 years old which supports their Essential Skills Award. The resource was developed by Mencap National College and focuses on enabling learners to develop “practical skills for the real world”. For more information on the award, call Tracy Wardle on [01935 403120](tel:01935403120) or e-mail [tracy.wardle@mencap.org.uk](mailto:tracy.wardle@mencap.org.uk).

[The Mental Health Foundation](#) The Foundation produces many publications on mental health. It also produces a newsletter, monthly updates and factsheets.

[MIND](#) (National Association for Mental Health) is a mental health charity covering England and Wales. Factsheets can be downloaded from their website on issues such as mental health problems and learning disabilities.

[National Autistic Society](#) provides an enormous amount of information ranging from introductory information to links to research sites. This is an extremely valuable resource for education professionals.

[National Deaf Children’s Society \(NCDS\)](#) Provides professionals with the latest information on campaigns, government news, NCDS projects and academic and professional research, publications and resources that are available to you.

[NASEN](#) (The National Association for Special Educational Needs) is an organisation that provides a forum for those actively involved with exceptional learning needs and/or disabilities and contributes to the formulation and development of policy in the area. NASEN also publishes quarterly the British Journal of Special Education and Support for Learning.

[National Autistic Society](#) provides an enormous amount of information ranging from introductory information to links to research sites. This is an extremely valuable resource for education professionals.

[NDCS](#) (National Deaf Children’s Society) campaigns to break down barriers faced by deaf children and young people. The website provides a considerable amount of information and research for families, young people and professionals working in the field.

[RADAR](#) (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) provides information and advice on all aspects of disability and has also compiled a list of recommended Disability Awareness or Equality trainers.

[Royal National Institute of Blind People](#) (RNIB) produces a huge range of resource materials. It runs a telephone information service and supports this with a range of fact sheets. One of the main ways in which LAs, schools and colleges will need to respond to DDA Part 4 is by ensuring that blind and partially sighted students can have access to teaching materials. RNIB has a wealth of experience in this area.

[Sense](#) The national (UK) voluntary organization working with and supporting people of all ages who are deafblind or have associated disabilities.

[Scope](#) is a national organisation for people with cerebral palsy. It also offers a range of services to professional staff in education and social services including information and advice. The Scope website offers a large quantity of useful information online and also provides a large index of additional publications that colleagues working primarily with disabled students will find very useful. The site is large and it may be helpful to go directly to the online publications catalogue:

[www.scope.org.uk/action/publications/index.shtml](http://www.scope.org.uk/action/publications/index.shtml)

[SHINE](#) is happy to provide information to professionals working with young people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus to enable them to provide improved support. Their website includes a publications section which is extremely helpful for education staff. [World of Inclusion](#) provides training and resources primarily for schools, but also for colleges and local authorities around the issue of inclusion for all students within our education system.