



## Accessibility Policy

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## KEY FACTS:

- This policy enables Alderbrook School to ensure compliance with laws regarding opportunity for students/potential students.
- It is reviewed every two years.
- Alderbrook School will comply with statutory requirements and guidance.
- The spirit of the law is to make/consider reasonable adjustments.

### Background

- 1 On 1 October 2012, The Equality Act 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. Alderbrook School's Accessibility Plan will be reviewed every two years.
- 2 The Act makes it unlawful for Alderbrook School to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a student or potential student in relation to:
  - Admissions;
  - The way we provide education for students;
  - The way we provide students access to any benefit, facility or service;
- 3 The protected characteristics are:
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Gender Reassignment
  - Marriage and Civil Partnership
  - Pregnancy and Maternity
  - Race
  - Religion and Belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual Orientation
- 4 There is still a requirement to have an accessibility plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled students to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information. Alderbrook's Accessibility Plan is outlined in this document.
- 5 The school's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a student has left the school, but relates also to events afterwards such as the provision of references, or former student networks.

### Disability Discrimination Act

- 6 The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:
  - the definition of disability 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;
  - 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 Educational Healthcare Plan (EHCP) or from other sources.

## Definition of Disability

- 7 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.
- 8 Some specific conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV are considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.
- 9 Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least twelve months.

## Alderbrook's Accessibility Plan

- 10 Our vision is to create a safe, happy and supportive environment in which each individual feels valued and respected, where true potential is recognised, high expectations are fulfilled, and personal achievements celebrated. For example, we believe 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.
- 11 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.
- 12 Alderbrook School is committed to providing reasonable adjustments for vulnerable students and students with disabilities.
- 13 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a vulnerable or disabled student, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces compared to other vulnerable or non-disabled students.
- 14 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a vulnerable or disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students.
- 15 Reasonable adjustments for vulnerable and disabled students are made in relation to exams and assessments. Please refer to the "Exam Specific Appendix to the Accessibility Policy March 2020"
- 16 In any dispute regarding what constitutes a reasonable adjustment, the Governing Body's decision is final. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.
- 17 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (i.e. via an EHCP) 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.
- 18 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software. This list is not exhaustive.
- 19 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; e.g. hearing aids.
- 20 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for vulnerable and disabled students will involve little or no cost or disruption and will therefore be considered as 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.

- 21 It is our aim to ensure that vulnerable and disabled students 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 students, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*.
- 22 While our school makes reasonable adjustments in relation to the behaviour policy for vulnerable or disabled students, we expect them to adhere to the same rules and values as other students.

### Discrimination Claims

- 23 Claims for discrimination on the grounds of disability against our school must be heard by the First Tier Tribunal (SENDIST) in England.
- 24 Such claims of discrimination or harassment of a student against our school, would be brought to the Tribunal by the parent/carer. This must be brought within six months of the act to which the claim relates. Any remedy will not include compensation.

### Monitoring & Evaluation

- 25 The named person in our school who is responsible for this plan is the SENCO.
- 26 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this Plan is implemented and to ensure that it is fair and equal to all.
- 27 It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor the success of this Plan by ensuring that the priority areas are addressed by them in the classroom, particularly with regard to the provision of information and curriculum access.
- 28 Our Accessibility Plan and any updates will be shared with our Governing Body by the SENCO or Headteacher.

## APPENDIX 1 - IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS: A CHECKLIST

*This list helps identify barriers to access that exist in schools. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of Alderbrook School.*

Section 1 : How Does Alderbrook School Deliver the Curriculum?		
Questions	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support vulnerable/disabled students?	X	
Are your classrooms optimally organized for vulnerable/disabled students?	X	
Do lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?	X	
Are lessons responsive to student diversity?	X	
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups & the whole class?	X	
Are all students encouraged to take part in Music, Drama & physical activities?	X	
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some vulnerable/disabled students, for example using lip reading?	X	
Do staff recognize and allow for the additional time required by some vulnerable/disabled students to use equipment in practical work?	X	
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for vulnerable/disabled students 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 students irrespective of attainment or impairment?	X	
Are there high expectations of all students?	X	
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	X	
Section 2 : Is Alderbrook School designed to meet the needs of all students?		
Questions	Yes	No
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 students?	X	

Can students 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	
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 students, including those 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
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for vulnerable/disabled students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?	X	
Are areas to which students should have access well lit?	X	
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired students such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?	X	
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted & located appropriately?	X	
<b>Section 3: How does your School deliver materials in other formats?</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for students and prospective students who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?	X	
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?	X	
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	