



## **POLICY DOCUMENT FRONTPAGE**

**POLICY NAME:** Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan

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## DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

### Table of Contents

#### Part A – Disability Equality Scheme

- 1 Policy Statement
- 2 Aims
- 3 Roles and Responsibilities
- 4 Development of the Scheme and Plan
- 5 Implementation
- 6 Disability Code of Practice
- 7 Arrangements for Collecting Information
- 8 Publication
- 9 Monitoring and Review
- 10 Appendix A
- 11 Appendix B
- 12 Appendix C

#### Part B – Accessibility Plan

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Information Gathering
- 3 Priorities
- 4 Action Plans
- 5 Annual Report
- 6 Appendix 1

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Policy is divided into two parts: an outline for a Disability Equality Scheme and an outline for an Accessibility Plan. This plan will be published on our website. It will also be made available on request to any current or prospective parent who requests it.

## **PART A – DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Alec Hunter Academy is committed to a fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of disablement. The Academy will welcome applications from people with disabilities to join the Academy community as students and staff.

“A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day to day activities” – the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 definition of disability.

The School’s Equality Policy is to ensure that there is no discrimination against any sub-group within our community. The Academy has been designed and/or adapted to have provision and accessibility for people with disabilities so that they may be integrated fully into Academy life. This includes parents <sup>1</sup> and members of the wider community.

The curriculum will be designed so that it may be delivered to provide flexible and equal access to all students whether they are able or have learning difficulties/physical disabilities as far as is practicable within a mainstream educational establishment.

### **2. AIMS**

The aims of the Scheme are to ensure that

- 1 Equality of opportunity is promoted between disabled people and other people
- 2 Discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 is eliminated
- 3 Harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability is eliminated
- 4 Positive attitudes towards disabled people are promoted
- 5 Participation by disabled people in public life is encouraged
- 6 Steps are taken to meet disabled people’s needs with a focus on policy and not just the needs of individuals
- 7 Applications for admission from all potential students are considered in line with the published admission arrangements
- 8 Applications for employment are considered and assessed on the basis of the applicants’ aptitudes, abilities and qualifications
- 9 Staff with disabilities and students with learning difficulties/disabilities have access to the appropriate support, including the delivery of written information and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of the Academy

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this Scheme the term “parents” means all those having parental responsibility for a child

- 10 The views of individual students, staff, parents, visitors and members of the community are taken into account:
  - as this Scheme is prepared and reviewed
  - at all times when their requirements are being assessed
- 11 All students are fully integrated into the Academy and individual needs are assessed and supported as far as is practicable within a mainstream educational establishment
- 12 Staff working with people with disabilities, either as colleagues or as students, have appropriate information, support and training
- 13 The Academy takes steps to enable staff and students who become disabled during their time at the Academy to continue in their chosen career or course of study as far as is practicable
- 14 Members of the public with disabilities can fully participate in public events held within the Academy
- 15 The Academy's premises are accessible and safe for people with disabilities, so far as is reasonably practicable and
- 16 No student or staff member with disabilities is treated less favourably as a result of her/his disability

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of the **Governing Body** to establish the policy on Disability Equality, to approve an Accessibility Plan and to monitor the effects of the Scheme and Plan

It is the responsibility of the **Headteacher** to ensure that:

- 1 Disabled staff, students and users of the Academy are not disadvantaged because of their disabilities
- 2 Consultations on the development and implementation of the Accessibility Plan will involve interested individuals and groups
- 3 All breaches of good practice are addressed promptly, using informal procedures where possible but implementing formal procedures where necessary

It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves with, comply with and implement the Scheme and the Plan in accordance with professional standards.

### **4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEME AND PLAN**

The Academy will make best use of available expertise (disabled students, their parents, specialist teachers, local voluntary organisations and others) to help to identify practices and arrangements that act as a barrier to including disabled students; the local authority will also be consulted to provide advice and information.

The Scheme and the associated Accessibility Plan will be informed by students, staff and parents with learning difficulties/disabilities. Their involvement will inform the preparation, development, publication of the Scheme and Plan and the arrangements for the review and reporting on the Scheme and Plan. They will help to identify the priorities, how these priorities should be met in the Action Plans and how the Academy should assess its progress.

It is intended that such involvement should:

- 1 Provide insights into the barriers faced by students, staff and parents with learning difficulties/disabilities
- 2 Use expertise to identify ways to overcome these barriers and
- 3 Improve working relationships between the Academy's Governing Body and students, staff and parents with learning difficulties/disabilities

The involvement of disabled people in drawing up this Scheme, including the means of its communication will include the following:

- 1 Consulting with parents via meetings, including meeting with the SEN Governor, the Academy newsletter and questionnaires
- 2 Consulting with students via tutorials, school council meetings and questionnaires
- 3 Staff questionnaire to identify understanding of disability and accessibility

Information will be gathered by:

- 1 SENCo
- 2 Leadership Group
- 3 Head of Facilities

The information will influence the Scheme as follows:

Analysis of the information gathered will enable the Academy to identify the areas of the curriculum which present difficulties for students with learning difficulties/disabilities and whether the physical environment of the Academy hampers access to the whole life of the Academy and try to make adjustments accordingly.

The Academy will consider how priorities identified in its Accessibility Plan fit in with other priorities that the Academy has to address.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) will be responsible for ensuring that staff and parents are made aware of this Policy and that the Disability Code of Practice set out below is followed.

The Headteacher and Governing Body will have overall responsibility for ensuring that this Policy is implemented.

## **6. DISABILITY CODE OF PRACTICE**

### **Environment**

- 1 The Academy will plan improvements to the physical environment of the premises and physical aids to access education
- 2 Any future building projects will be considered at the planning stage for accessibility and usability by people with disabilities

- 3 The Academy will take a strategic approach to planning for increased disability access; this might include linking accessibility projects to all other capital building work where appropriate
- 4 The Academy will consider, where appropriate, accessibility in all purchasing decisions
- 5 Evacuation procedures and escape routes will be carefully planned and published for students and staff with disabilities and those who have disabilities who are users of the premises

## **Students**

- 1 Applications will be considered in line with the published admission arrangements for all students. An applicant's learning difficulty/disability will not prevent her/him from being offered a place and being integrated into the Academy unless:
  - the content, structure and delivery of the curriculum are such that the student would be prevented from fulfilling a major part of it
  - the Academy would be unable to provide suitably trained staff or facilities to allow the student's needs and the requirements of the curriculum to be met
  - admitting the student would be seriously detrimental to the learning of other students in the Academy
- 2 The Academy will aim to provide students with learning difficulties/disabilities the appropriate support to enable them to be fully integrated. The Academy will not treat a student with learning difficulties/disabilities less favourably than any other student and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the full participation and integration of students with learning difficulties/disabilities
- 3 As far as resources allow, the needs of the students with learning difficulties/disabilities will be taken into account in the design, structure and flexibility of teaching methods and delivery. Where a curriculum area is organized in such a way that a student with learning difficulties/disabilities cannot fully participate, alternative provision will be made.
- 4 The Academy will make written information available to disabled students in an appropriate format. The information normally provided by the Academy to its students will be made available to students with learning difficulties/disabilities, taking account of students' disabilities, students' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable time frame.
- 5 Students with learning difficulties/disabilities or who become disabled whilst studying at the Academy will be given appropriate support from staff to enable them to have equal access to the curriculum. Individual needs will be considered and addressed by all curriculum areas in collaboration with the SENCo and a Student Development Plan (SDP) drawn up, which will be reviewed a minimum of twice per year.

- 6 The curriculum covers not only teaching and learning but the wider curriculum of the Academy such as participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities or school visits. Curriculum access will be considered at a “whole school” level as many barriers to access to the curriculum will be similar for many groups of students and it is helpful to take a strategic approach to removing those barriers.
- 7 The Academy recognizes that special arrangements may be required to enable students with learning difficulties/disabilities, including specific learning difficulties, to exhibit their capabilities and knowledge. Special arrangements will be made to enable such students to perform to the best of their ability by meeting their individual needs. For example, the Academy will liaise with the relevant examination boards in such instances. Students and parents will be made fully aware of the process for making special arrangements for assessment and examinations by the SENCo in liaison with specific curriculum area managers and the Academy’s Examinations Officer.

### **Staff**

- 1 In gathering information on the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees, the Academy will include all those working at the Academy in whatever capacity, including those who are working under contract.
- 2 The Academy’s policies on phased return to work after sickness, sick leave and monitoring may be relevant for disabled staff and reference should be made to the Sickness Absence Policy
- 3 Wherever practicable, the Academy will:
  - consider and seek to employ people with disabilities in jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications in line with the Equality Act 2010
  - ensure that employees with disabilities are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications
  - ensure that employees with disabilities are not disadvantaged when the renewal of fixed-term contracts is being considered.

Members of staff who become disabled should continue, so far as is practicable and dependant on their ability to carry out the duties of their post, to be employed by the Academy at the discretion of the Headteacher and Governing Body. Help from related professional organisations should be sought when considering not only the possible effects of the disability but also other consequential disadvantages, such as loss of status or financial loss.

The Academy will endeavor to make any reasonable adjustments to enable the employee to continue in post. Options might include:

- continuing in the same post
- a gradual return to work
- a reduction in hours
- redeployment

In certain circumstances it might be necessary to consider:

- premature retirement on grounds of incapacity
- termination of employment

In cases where a disability is a degenerative or a progressive condition, careful consideration would be given to the selection of the most appropriate option (s).

The Academy will make reasonable changes to work practices and where possible within the workplace, to enable people with disabilities including those members of staff who become disabled whilst employed, to work successfully.

The Academy will ensure that a programme of training is offered to staff to increase the awareness of students with learning difficulties/disabilities and inform them of appropriate action to be taken when delivering the curriculum. Student Development Assistants will support teaching staff as required to help ensure that students with learning difficulties/disabilities have equal access to the curriculum.

**People being provided with goods, facilities and services, including non-educational services:**

The Academy will make adjustments for a disabled parent, carer, Governor or other person using the Academy by:

- Altering policies, practices and procedures where necessary – e.g allowing guide dogs into the Academy
- Providing auxiliary aids and services – e.g. providing a sign language interpreter for a deaf parent attending a parents’ evening
- Removing or altering physical features – e.g. providing a loop system to improve the acoustics for people with hearing impairments
- Providing a reasonable alternative method, or the manner in which it provides a service – e.g. meeting with a disabled parent in a downstairs room

**7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION**

- 1 The Academy will promote the breadth of the definition of disability and of the people who are likely to be included in this definition
  
- 2 The Academy will gather and analyse information on:
  - The effect on the Academy’s policies on the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees
  - The educational opportunities available to and the achievements of, disabled students
  - The arrangements for using information to support the review of the Action Plan and to inform subsequent schemes by means of:
    - i. Analysis of recruitment data and retention data
    - ii. Analysis of student achievement
    - iii. Student progress meetings
    - iv. SDP Reviews
  
- 3 The Academy will:
  - Explain why information is needed
  - Reassure students, staff and parents about confidentiality
  - Ensure that the ethos of the Academy is conducive to disclosure
  
- 4 The Academy will seek to collect information on other disabled people using its facilities and services, to show how it is promoting disability equality for disabled people

## **8. PUBLICATION**

This Scheme together with the Accessibility Plan is available for anyone asking for a copy and will be published on the school website. The Academy is prepared to provide its plans in alternative formats.

## **9. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 1 The Academy will adopt a planned approach, over the lifetime of the Scheme, to assessing the impact of its current policies on disability equality. As the Academy develops its approach, assessing the impact of policies on disability equality will become part of the Academy's approach to the review and development of all policies. As new policies are developed, their impact on disability equality will be assessed from the outset
- 2 The Academy will provide information on its Accessibility Plans to meet any requirements of its funding agreement
- 3 In the annual report on its Accessibility Plan the Academy will report on the progress it has made on its Action Plan and the effect of what it has done
- 4 The Academy will review and revise its Scheme and Plan every three years. The Academy will make the following arrangements to use information to support the review of the Action Plan and to inform subsequent Schemes:
  - Termly meetings to review the scheme/plan including feedback from stakeholders
- 5 As part of this Scheme, the Academy will:
  - Revisit the information that was used to identify the priorities for the Scheme and
  - Re-examine the information to see if the actions taken have affected opportunities and outcomes for disabled students, staff and parents
- 6 The review of the Scheme will inform its revision including how the Academy sets new priorities and new Action Plans for the next Scheme. This process will again:
  - Involve disabled students, staff and parents and
  - Be based on information that the Academy has gathered
- 7 The Academy will review and align its Disability Equality Scheme and its Accessibility Plan so that it produces a new Scheme and Plan at the same time
- 8 The SENCo and Head of Facilities will report on the Scheme and Plan to the Headteacher as appropriate
- 9 The Headteacher will report to Governors on any relevant aspects of the working of the Scheme and Plan as appropriate
- 10 Appendix B sets out some questions which may help the Governing Body to fulfil its disability equality duty
- 11 The Governing Body will review the policy every three years

## APPENDIX A

### REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES

These adjustments may include:

- Adaptions to premises
- Re-allocating some duties
- Altering hours
- Finding alternative accommodation/changing the person's place of work
- Rehabilitation, assessment or treatment leave
- Examining the duties to see where additional support may be required  Training
- Modifying equipment
- Modifying instructions or manuals
- Modifying assessment or testing procedures
- Providing a reader or interpreter
- Providing supervision
- Transferring the person to fill an existing vacancy

**APPENDIX B**

**THE DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY AND THE GOVERNING BODY**

(Questions the Governing Body may want to ask itself as the “responsible body” for the Academy)

<b>Duties to disabled student, staff and parents</b>			
Does the Governing Body receive regular reports on how the Academy is meeting its duties to:  <input type="checkbox"/> disabled students?  <input type="checkbox"/> disabled staff?  <input type="checkbox"/> disabled parents, carers, governors and to other disabled people who use the Academy or may want to?			
<b>Disability Equality Duty: General Duty</b>			
Does the Governing Body have regard to the need to:  <input type="checkbox"/> promote equality of opportunity for disabled people?  <input type="checkbox"/> eliminate disability discrimination?  <input type="checkbox"/> eliminate disability-related harassment?  <input type="checkbox"/> promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?  <input type="checkbox"/> encourage participation by disabled people in public life?  <input type="checkbox"/> take steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment?			
<b>Disability Equality Duty: Specific Duty</b>			
Does the Academy have a Disability Equality Scheme?			
Did the Academy involve disabled people (students, staff and parents) in the development of the Scheme			

<p>Does the Academy's Scheme show:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> how disabled people have been involved?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> how information is gathered on the effect of the Academy's policies on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and retention of disabled staff?</li> <li>• Opportunities for and achievements of disabled students?</li> </ul> <p><input type="checkbox"/> how the Academy assesses the impact of its policies, current or proposed, on disability equality?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> the steps it is going to take to meet the general duty (the Academy's Accessibility Plan)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> how information will be used to support the review of the Accessibility Plan and to inform subsequent Schemes?</p>			
<p>Did the Academy implement the actions in its Scheme within three years of the previous review of the Scheme?</p>			
<p>Does the Governing Body:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> report on its Scheme annually?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> review and revise its Scheme every three years?</p>			

## APPENDIX C

### SUMMARY OF THE ACADEMY'S DUTIES UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

This applies to three main Academy functions:

- To the Academy in its main function of providing education to students
- To the Academy as an employer
- To the Academy as a provider of services to parents and carers and the wider public

The employment and service provision duties have applied to schools since 1996 when the DDA was first implemented and subsequently amended by successive versions of the Act, most recently by the Equality Act 2010. The education duties were taken from the SEN and Disability Act 2001. The Disability Equality Duty applies across the other main functions covered by the DDA/EA.

#### **The Disability Equality Duty:**

The Duty requires the Academy to take a more proactive, more explicit, more involved and more comprehensive approach to promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination.

#### **More Proactive**

The Academy needs to move from a focus on an individual response to an approach that builds disability equality considerations in from the start and at every level of the Academy: at strategic, policy, management and classroom level.

#### **More Explicit**

The Academy has to be able to demonstrate what it has done and what it plans to do to improve opportunities and outcomes for disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the Academy.

#### **More Involved**

The Academy has to involve disabled students, staff, parents and others in the development of its Scheme. Disabled people need to be involved from the very start and their involvement needs to inform the preparation, development, publication, review and reporting of the Scheme.

*For detailed information on the Equality Act 2010 go to: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010)*

## **PART B – ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1 The Academy is committed to planning on a rolling three-year basis to increase the accessibility for disabled students over time. The nature and content of the Academy's Plan will depend on:
  - Its disabled student population
  - Any prospective students who are disabled
  - The size of the Academy
  - The resources available to it and
  - The strategic steer given by the local authority
- 2 The Plan will include increasing access for disabled students to the Academy's curriculum, improving access to the physical environment of the Academy and improving the delivery of written information to disabled students.
- 3 The Plan will be prepared following the involvement of students with learning difficulties/disabilities and with staff and parents with disabilities.
- 4 The Academy will make best use of available expertise; disabled students, their parents, specialist teachers, local voluntary organisations and others to help to identify practices and arrangements that act as a barrier to including disabled students; the local authority will also be consulted to provide advice and information
- 5 In producing the Plan, the Academy will:
  - Draw on detailed information, for example by using data on the presence, participation and attainment of disabled students to inform the priorities
  - Involve disabled students, staff and parents, for example by asking them to identify issues to be addressed by the Plan
  - Collect information about disabled staff and parents
  - Assess the impact of Academy policies
  - Draw on the principles contained in the Academy's Disability Equality Scheme and the, evaluation, report and review of the Scheme.

### **2. INFORMATION GATHERING**

The gathering of information will include an analysis of:

- The presence of disabled students, for example: how many disabled students there are in the Academy, which impairment groups are represented, or not represented, in the Academy
- The participation of disabled students across the life of the Academy, for example in curricular and extra-curricular activities, in positions of responsibility and the factors affecting participation, for example: policies on medication, bullying, access.
- Achievements of disabled students as reflected in, for example: exams, accredited learning, achievements in extra-curricular activities, broader outcomes such as those set out in *Every Child Matters*.
- The recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees including how disabled staff are represented amongst different groups of employees, at different levels of the Academy and amongst those who leave the Academy.

- The benefits of a diverse workforce

Appendix 1 to this Plan sets out the arrangements whereby the Academy might collect some information from parents of new students

Appendix 2 to this Plan has a range of questions to help the Academy identify barriers to access

An impact assessment will be undertaken on the information gathered by the Academy and a set of priorities agreed

### **3. PRIORITIES**

- 1 Priorities for the Academy will be set from:
  - An examination of the information that the Academy has gathered and
  - The feedback that the Academy has received from the disabled students, staff and parents who have been involved in the development of the Scheme.
- 2 The Academy will also set priorities that will help to improve the gathering and analysis of information and the involvement of disabled students, staff and parents to better inform the next Scheme and Plan

### **4. ACTION PLANS**

- 1 The Action Plan supports the implementation of the Accessibility Plan and oversight of this to check progress is the responsibility of the Governing Body. Once the Academy has produced an Accessibility Plan, the Academy has a statutory duty to implement the Plan and to allocate adequate resource to it.
- 2 The Action Plan will be reviewed at least twice yearly by the Resources & Staffing Committee of the Governing Body

### **5. REVIEW**

- 1 The Academy will report on the progress it has made with the Action Plan.
- 2 The Academy will review and revise its Plan every three years
- 3 As part of the review of its Plan, the Academy will:
  - Revisit the information that was used to identify the priorities for the Plan and
  - Re-examine the information to see if actions that the Academy has taken have affected opportunities and outcomes for disabled students, staff and parents
- 4 The review of the Accessibility Plan will inform how the Academy sets new priorities and new Action Plans for the next Accessibility Plan. This process will:
  - Involve disabled students, staff and parents and
  - Be based on information that the Academy has gathered
- 5 The Academy will align its Accessibility Plan and its Disability Equality Scheme so that a new Scheme and Plan are produced at the same time

## APPENDIX 1

### IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS: CHECKLIST

This checklist should help the Academy to identify barriers to access. The list is not exhaustive. It has been designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of the Academy.

Question	Yes/No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled students?	
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled students?	
Do lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?	
Are lessons responsive to student diversity?	
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?	
Are all students encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?	
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled students, for example using lip-reading?	
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled students to use equipment in practical work?	
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled students who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?	
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?	
Are Academy visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all students irrespective of attainment or impairment?	
Are there high expectations of all students?	
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	
Does the size and layout of all 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?	
Can students who use wheelchairs move around the Academy without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?	
Are pathways of travel around the Academy site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL students, including students with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?	

Question	Yes/No
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?	
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?	
Are areas to which students should have access well lit?	
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired students such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?	
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	
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?	
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?	
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	