



The Harefield Academy
Achievement through Active Learning

Accessibility Strategy

2016-2017

Updated July 2016

Any reference to The Harefield Academy in this policy also include the boarding provision offered at The Lord Adonis House. By default all nomenclature covers the day school and boarding provision.

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative Context | 3 |
| Who is to be considered as having a disability? | 3 |
| Disability and special educational needs | 4 |
| Active involvement of students | 5 |
| The main priorities of the accessibility strategy | 5 |

1. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Equality Act (EA), 2010, The SEND Code of Practice, 2014, the Children and Families Act, 2014, require that schools have an Accessibility Plan involving and available to parents/carers, staff and students. At The Harefield Academy this document is monitored and maintained by conducting an Accessibility Audit to ensure that provision is appropriate.

The Harefield Academy has a duty towards all students, particularly those with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LDD) under the EA:

- ✓ Not to treat students less favourably for reasons related to one of the 7 'protected characteristics'; sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.
- ✓ To make reasonable adjustments for students where there is need under the 7 protected characteristics, to include the provision of auxiliary aids and services to disabled students where these relate directly to their education so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage. Schools are allowed to treat disabled students more favourably than non-disabled students, and in some cases are required to do so (where these are not provided for under an EHCP or Statement of SEN), by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with students without disabilities;
- ✓ To publish and implement an accessibility strategy designed to increase access to school education for all students including those with a disability.

This strategy sets out the three areas required by the planning duties in the EA:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum.
- Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

2. WHO IS TO BE CONSIDERED AS HAVING A DISABILITY?

The Equality Act, 2010 gives the legal definition of disability as follows:

- A person has a disability if they have 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to-day activities'.
- A 'long-term' impairment is one which has or will last at least 12 months, and if it ceases is likely to recur.
- 'Physical impairment' includes sensory impairment, such as those affecting sight or hearing as well as specific medical conditions such as diabetes or epilepsy.

- ‘Mental impairment’ includes any impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness or impairment. It’s consideration as a disability is according to its effect on a student’s ability to carry out day-to-day activities. A child’s ability to memorise, concentrate, learn, speak, move is central to their education. An impairment that has a long-term and substantial effect on a child’s ability to do these things may amount to a disability.” (DfES 2006 *‘Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools’*).
- The term therefore is meant to cover a wide range of impairments relating to mental functioning, including ‘learning disabilities’ and SEN needs such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), etc.

3. DISABILITY AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A student has special educational needs ‘if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for the student’. A learning difficulty is a ‘disability’ if it prevents or hinders a student from making use of education facilities and calls for special educational provision to be made (1996 Education Act). Therefore students who have learning disabilities and receive provision under the SEN framework may also be recognised under the EA.

The Harefield Academy welcomes the broad definition of disability as in government guidance:

‘For planning purposes and for avoidance of discrimination it may be helpful to think of more students with SEN being included within the definition of disability rather than fewer: it is likely that many of the students who have SEN and a statement or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), or who are at SEN Support (code K), will count as disabled.’ (‘Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years settings’ 2006)

A student who has either special educational needs or another disability will be referred to in this Strategy as having Learning Difficulty or Disability (LDD).

The Harefield Academy is a welcoming inclusive community, providing education for all, taking into account of the wide diversity of characteristics and needs.

The Academy’s aim is that all students achieve positive outcomes of the Every Child Matters Agenda.

The Academy’s commitment to equality of opportunity for learning is underpinned by the National Curriculum inclusion statement to:

- ✓ Set suitable learning challenges.
- ✓ Respond to students’ diverse needs.
- ✓ Overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

The Harefield Academy has high expectations of and ambitions for all students including those with LDD.

The Academy recognises that it is important to:

- ✓ Understand that some students may need more support than others. We may need to offer greater assistance to some children to ensure that they have the same chance to achieve as their non-LDD peers.
- ✓ Value the diversity of all students ensuring equity of access to provisions which aim to redress the impact of social exclusion and under-achievement.

The Harefield Academy has therefore made the following commitments to children and young people with LDD:

- ✓ Ensure that they can be helped to enjoy and achieve.
- ✓ Provide services/interventions for them where there is evidence that they make a difference and provide value for money.
- ✓ Ensure that interventions and services are student-centred.
- ✓ Ensure that service or intervention providers collaborate to deliver a cohesive strategy for support
- ✓ Ensure that students and their families have equality of opportunity to be engaged in the wider activities offered at The Harefield Academy.

4. ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS

The Harefield Academy recognises that an accessibility strategy has to serve the students for whom it is intended, and therefore their involvement is crucial.

There is a wide consultation process in developing and maintaining this strategy so that everyone has ownership, and the voice of the student with LDD or one of the other 'protected characteristics' , along with their parents, is central in future considerations.

5. THE MAIN PRIORITIES OF THE ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

- a. Increasing access to the curriculum (refer to THA **SEND Policy for Inclusive Education**).
- b. Increasing access to the physical environment of The Academy (refer to THA 'Building Bulletin 102).
- c. Increasing access to information.