

OASIS ACADEMY: ISLE OF SHEPPEY - DISABILITY ACCESS STATEMENT

Introduction

Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey 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.

The Academy has been designed and built to have provision and accessibility for people with disabilities so that they may be integrated fully into Academy life and has been designed to be fully DDA compliant (as expected with new school buildings). The curriculum will be designed so that it may be delivered to provide flexible and equal access to all students whether able or disabled as far as is practicable within a mainstream educational establishment.

Aims

The aims of this statement are to ensure that:

- Applications for admission from all potential students are considered in line with the published admission arrangements;
- Applications for employment are considered and assessed on the basis of the applicants' aptitudes, abilities and qualifications;
- Disabled staff and students have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of the Academy;
- The views of individual students or staff are taken into account at all times when their requirements are being assessed;
- 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;
- Staff working with disabled people, either as colleagues or as students, have appropriate information, support and training;
- Steps are taken 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;
- Disabled members of the public can fully participate in public events held within the Academy;
- The building is being designed to be fully DDA compliant; and
- No disabled student or staff member is treated less favourably as a result of their disability.

Implementation

The Principal and the Governing Body will have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy statement is implemented.

Environment

The buildings have been designed to ensure consideration is given to usage by any current or future people with disabilities. Any future building projects, or indeed modifications to current buildings, will be considered at the planning stage for accessibility and usability by people with disabilities.

Evacuation procedures and escape routes for students and staff with disabilities will be carefully planned and published.

Students

Applications will be considered in line with the published admission arrangements for all students. An applicant's disability will not prevent him/her from being offered a place and 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; or
- The Academy would be unable to provide suitably trained staff or facilities to allow the requirements of the National Curriculum to be met.

The Academy will aim to provide students with a disability with the appropriate support to enable them to be fully integrated. The Academy will not treat a student with a disability less favourably than any other student and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the full participation and integration of disabled students.

As far as resources allow, the needs of disabled students will be taken into account in the design, structure and flexibility of teaching methods and delivery. Where a curriculum area is organised in such a way that a disabled student cannot fully participate, alternative provision will be made.

Students with a disability 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 Lead Co-ordinator in this area.

The Academy recognises that special arrangements may be required to enable students with 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. 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 Lead Co-ordinator in liaison with specific curriculum area managers and the Academy's Examinations Manager.

Staff

Wherever practicable, the Academy will:

- Consider and seek to employ disabled people in jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) (see References section below)

- Ensure that employees with disabilities are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- Ensure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged when the renewal of fixed-term contracts is being considered.

Members of staff who become disabled, so far as is practicable, should continue to remain employed by the Academy at the discretion of the Principal and Governing Body, dependant on their ability to carry out the duties of their post. 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 endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments to enable the employee to continue in post. However, options might include:

- Continuing in the same post
- A gradual return to work
- A reduction in hours
- Redeployment
- Premature retirement on grounds of incapacity
- Termination of employment.

In cases where a disability is a degenerative, progressive condition that develops over time, careful consideration should be given to the selection of the most appropriate option(s).

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

The Academy will ensure that a programme of training is offered to staff to increase their awareness of students with disabilities and inform them of appropriate action to be taken when delivering the curriculum. Teaching assistants will support teaching staff as required to help ensure that disabled students have equal access to the curriculum.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

References

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) states that an employer must make “reasonable adjustments” to allow an individual to be employed. These adjustments may include:

- Adaptations to premises
- Re-allocating some duties
- Altering hours
- Finding alternative accommodation
- Rehabilitation leave
- Training

- Modifying equipment
- Modifying instructions or manuals
- Modifying assessment or testing procedures
- Providing a reader or interpreter
- Providing supervision

Further information

Further information can be obtained from:

- The Code of Practice for Schools" (Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Part 4)
- The Employment Service
- The Disability Rights Commission (www.drc.org/drc/RightsAndRequirements)