Accessibility Policy 2020/21

Person responsible	Sara Edwards and Sue Fulbrook
Approved by directors	
First written	November 2019

For review	Reviewed	Signature
July 2020	19/11/20	S.Fulbrook
July 2021	21/07/2021	S.Fulbrook
July 2022		
July 2023		
July 2024		
July 2025		

All policies are renewed annually. If no change then just signed. If an amendment or full change is required, this is recorded.

Our Inclusion Vision…

…is for every student in Acorn Education Trust schools to achieve the most successful individual outcomes, educationally, socially, in their personal life, and within their local community, and for their unique needs to be recognised and met as early as possible. Our Accessibility Plan intends to achieve this vision by empowering these children and young people to achieve all that they can.

Our aim is for every child and young person to:

- develop the necessary skills and knowledge to respond effectively to the challenges of the future;
- be confident;
- have a strong sense of right and wrong;
- be adaptable and resilient;
- develop as an independent learner who takes responsibility for his/her own learning, and who questions, reflects and perseveres in the pursuit of learning;
- be able to contribute, work and communicate effectively with others, and to strive for excellence.

We believe that our parents, carers and schools should work together to provide the best and most accessible opportunities for our students, and we will do all we can to ensure that any barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude are removed.

We will ensure that we:

- develop our school culture, policies and practice in order to include all our students;
- access the right training and ongoing professional development to enable our continued focus on the process of further developing inclusion;
- found our inclusive approach on respect for difference and a commitment to building relationships that benefit every child and young person;
- offer all our students excellence, choice, flexible and appropriate support, and support and facilitate the inclusion of their views;
- examine our school sites in order to identify how we can improve the environment for children, young people and adults with disabilities and document this in an accessibility plan.

National Background

Improving access to education and educational achievement for disabled students is essential to ensure equality of opportunity, full participation in society, access to employment opportunities and inclusion within mainstream education.

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by introducing new duties on Local Authorities (LA) and Schools in relation to disabled students and prospective students. From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply. The main duties are not to treat disabled students less favourably and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage. Additional provision under the new Equality Act 2010 was introduced in September 2012, and relates to the requirement for schools to provide Auxiliary Aids for disabled students subject to the Reasonable Adjustment duty. The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 2015 also requires schools to make provision for children and young people with SEND.

The Disability Discrimination Act (2005) introduced the duty to promote disability equality from December 2006. This duty applies to EY settings, schools and LAs. Schools and LAs have a planning duty to prepare and publish accessibility strategies and access plans in order to increase over time the accessibility of school buildings, and access to education and information for disabled students. Schools' Accessibility Plans should also consider access to after-school activities and Extended School activities if they are based on their school site.

What Acorn Education Trust will endeavour to do

Acorn Education Trust will endeavour to develop learners who are:

- self-aware, and have the necessary skills and knowledge to take on challenges of the future;
- confident learners who are adaptable and resilient, can think independently and communicate effectively;
- self-directed, and can question, reflect and persevere, active contributors, able to work effectively with others.

In line with the Teachers' Standards (September 2012), and a quality first teaching approach, Acorn Education Trust schools will endeavour to:

- adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students;
- know when and how to *differentiate* appropriately, using approaches which enable students to be taught effectively;
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit students' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these;
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children and young people, and know how to adapt teaching to support students' education at different stages of development;
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them;
- be aware of the physical environment in schools and how this impacts learners.

Acorn Education Trust will:

- plan for and teach children with learning needs through a range of proven interventions
- use a range of inclusive teaching strategies
- be fully conversant with the range of catch-up programmes
- take an informed and independent view of the possible literacy and mathematics interventions that are available
- ensure the effective supported transition of vulnerable children and young people
- evaluate the outcomes of our current additional provision and the value for money it provides
- make informed decisions about how best to target available funding in the future
- recognise and unlock the potential of students and develop a strong culture for success
- enhance the life chances of our most vulnerable children
- provide effective professional development for staff and governors
- liaise with outside agencies
- keep parents and carers informed.

Acorn Education Trust is aware that reasonable adjustments may be needed to the classrooms and schools to create safe spaces, calming areas and workstations for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties. From September 2012 there has also been a new requirement to provide Auxiliary Aids for Disabled students subject to the Reasonable Adjustment duty.

Acorn Education Trust will ensure that we engage with support services from health and education who can advise about adaptations to the inside and outside environment for individuals to help include students with sensory integration needs. This will include advice and guidance relating to:

- issues of physical space and how to reduce distractions;
- opportunities to present information visually;
- providing organisational strategies to complete activities;
- having visual structure to help with organisation, increase clarity and provide instruction.

Acorn Education Trust will ensure that we make our best endeavours to ensure that information about our schools and procedures is as accessible as possible.

Key National Documents

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA): http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/1995050.htm

- SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA): http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/20010010.htm

- SEN Green Paper: Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability - A consultation (March 2011): https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208027

- Children and Families Bill 2013: http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/childrenandfamilies.html

- Draft legislation on Reform of provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs: (TSO September 2012)

- Removing Barriers to Achievement: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080906003404/http://teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/senstrategy/

- Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years Settings: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20091204130917/teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/disabilityandthedda/ddapart0/

- Reasonable adjustments for Disabled Students: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/education-providers-schools-guidance/key-concepts/reasonable-adjustments/

- Equality Act 2010: Guidance on Matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of Disability: http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC8QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.equalityhumanrights.com%2Fuploaded_files%2Fguidance_on_matters_to_be_taken_into_account_in_determining_questions_relating_to_the_definition_of_disability.pdf&ei=cIs8Ub21I-GP7AahgYGQCQ&usg=AFQjCNFfomnFA6mFhZmERSCa6qGzCVW5Rw&bvm=bv.43287494,d.d2k

- Equality Act 2010 (Schedule 10): http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10

- The Equality Act (2010) A guide for those working with learners with sensory impairment: National Sensory Impairment Partnership (Nat SIP), Revised – March 2012

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice: 0-25, January 2015: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25