



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (Furness Academy)

Approved by: Local Academy Committee	
Chair	Simon Shierley
Signed:	
Date:	10 th Oct 2021
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Date:	

Policy Owner:	Headteacher
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. The overriding principle of equalities legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However the provisions in relation to disability are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person.

There are some minor differences around disability in the new Act when compared with the previous legislation.

- The Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must be unable to carry out to meet the definition
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The fact that it must be 'reasonable' provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be justified (bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally).
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities will be under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through a statement of SEND.

As in previous legislation a school/setting must not discriminate against a pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school/setting to treat a disabled pupil unfavourably. Such treatment could amount to:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from a disability
- Harassment

Direct discrimination can never be justified but a school/setting could justify indirect discrimination against a disabled pupil, and discrimination arising from a disability if the discrimination is the result of action that is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

2. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Equality Act 2010: a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment;
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial;

- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Progressive conditions considered to be a disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairment are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions that are specifically excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

It should be noted that this definition is *not just regarding physical difficulties* but also covers a wide range of:

- Sensory difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Impairment resulting from, or consisting of, a mental illness

In addition there is a range of 'hidden impairments' such as

- Dyslexia
- Speech and Language Impairments
- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Impairment does not itself mean that a pupil is disabled but rather it is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in one or more of the following areas that has to be considered:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

3. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils:

- When something we do places a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage to other pupils, we must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- We will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so, and where such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage the pupil faces in comparison to his non-disabled peers.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The test is whether the adjustment is reasonable, and if it is then there can be no justification for why it is not made. We will not be expected to make adjustments that are not reasonable.

There is as yet no clarity on what may be 'reasonable' although the Code of Practice will include factors that should be taken into account. It will be for us to decide the reasonableness of adjustments based on the individual circumstances of each case. Factors to consider may include the financial or other resources available, the effectiveness of the adjustment, its effect on other pupils, health and safety requirements, and whether aids have been made available through the SEND route.

The reasonable adjustments duty is intended to complement the accessibility planning duties, and the existing SEND statement provisions, under which Local Authorities have to provide auxiliary aids and services where a statement details that provision. When a disabled pupil does not have a statement of SEND (or the statement does not provide the necessary aid) then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will fall to the school/setting.

As in the previous legislation we are not under a duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we should be planning to do so as part of our Accessibility planning.

4. AIMS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The planning duties on schools and Local Authorities are the same as the duties in the previous DDA. Schools are required to have an Accessibility Plan detailing how they will improve access to the physical environment, increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils, and how they will improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils. The LA is required to have an Access Strategy.

In **FURNESS ACADEMY**, we have a commitment to equal opportunities for all members of the Academy community and our Accessibility Plan outlines our intention to remove barriers for disabled pupils and to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the different areas of the national curriculum, increase access to extra-curricular activities and the wider Academy curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the Academy to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Furthermore, under our equality duties, we intend to improve the physical environment of the Academy to enable any disabled person (pupil, parent/carer, employees or visitor) to access facilities and services and improve the availability of accessible information to any disabled person.

This Accessibility Plan will, therefore, **begin the process of addressing the needs of disabled people** through specific targets.

It is a requirement that the Academy's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the Academy will address the priorities identified in the plan – see Appendix A.

Compliance with the disability duty under the Equality Act is consistent with the Trust's aims and equality objectives, and the operation of the Trust's SEND policy.

The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates in part, to the Asset Management Plan (access section) of the Academy, which is undertaken regularly by the Local Authority. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward

into subsequent plans. The Plan will need to be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period.

FURNESS ACADEMY strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the Academy are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the Academy community, everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect. Pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

5. KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of our Accessibility Plan are as follows:

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the Academy community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability.
- We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
- We are committed to providing all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and we endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum Framework ([Click here to access](#)) which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
 - setting suitable learning challenges;
 - responding to a pupil's diverse learning needs;
 - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

6. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

- Furness Academy is situated in the centre of Barrow-in-Furness, its student catchment area covers schools across the Barrow area.
- Furness Academy is a large-sized secondary school and has 1182 students, aged from 11 – 16 on roll. Of those students, 5.3% currently have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- The school has above average numbers of disadvantaged students (33%), students accessing free school meals (29%) and students requiring SEN support (12.6%).
- There are 73 teaching staff and 135 non-teaching staff at Furness Academy.
- Furness Academy operates a number of before and after-school clubs attended by Academy pupils only and also offers a breakfast club, providing free breakfasts for all.
- The premises are used outside school hours for parent's evenings, school plays, concerts and fairs.
- The premises are leased out for evening classes under a formal letting outside school hours and the classes are attended by general public.
- Furness Academy is fully accessible to wheelchair users and has a lift installed so each floor is wheelchair accessible. There are disabled toilets on each floor of the building. All classrooms have the ability to also include wheelchair adaptable tables.
- Transport to Furness Academy is either on foot, by public transport or private transport.
- The nearest bus service operates from various areas across Barrow. The bus stop is on the main highway with a short walk to the main school entrance gates.

- The nearest train service operates from Barrow town centre. Both Barrow and Roose Station stops are close to the school, approximately a 15 minute walk away from Furness Academy.

7. DEVELOPMENT

7.1 The Purpose and Direction of the School's Plan: Vision and Values

Furness Academy:

- *has high ambitions for its disabled pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life;*
- *is committed to identifying and then removing barriers to disabled students in all aspects of school life;*
- *values the individual and the contribution they make to all aspects of school life;*
- *will strive to ensure that its disabled students have access to all areas of the curriculum and teaching resources so as to develop fully in their education;*
- *acknowledges a commitment to embrace the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum;*
- *will continue to focus on removing barriers in every area of the life of the school;*
- *is committed to embracing equal opportunities for all members of the school community.*

7.2 Information from Pupil Data and School Audit

See Appendix A (Accessibility Audit – September 2022)

Key starting points for the school's plan:

- *The Academy has identified that we have, as at the start of the academic year 2022/23 a high number of students, with a range of needs, regarded as disabled under the terms of the DDA. In order to ensure that our data is up to date and accurate we will:*
- *liaise with the Local Authority, local schools so as to identify and therefore plan a response to students with a disability well before they arrive;*
- *identify early on in their school career any obstacles to the effective learning of disabled students;*
- *use all available data to inform the planning of individual student learning patterns;*
- *ensure that staff attend relevant training, as applicable, depending on the needs of children.*

7.3 Views of those Consulted during the development of the Plan

FURNESS ACADEMY will:

- *ensure that we provide the best choices for students wanting to enroll here;*
- *consult the full Local Academy Committee;*
- *consult staff including specifically SENCO, FET site management;*
- *set up a structure to allow the views of students, both able and disabled to be taken into account;*
- *communicate with parents/carers to ascertain their views on our provision for students and any developments they feel would be of use to the students.*
- *involve outside agencies who already exist to assist disabled students in their education;*
- *ensure the views of ALL those consulted are taken into consideration and the plan modified where reasonable to meet the needs of stakeholders;*

8. SCOPE OF THE PLAN

8.1 Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the Academy curriculum

- to investigate how the access to those areas of the curriculum that are normally difficult for disabled students to access can be improved;
- to further investigate what support or alternative approaches can be adopted to increase the choice/participation of disabled students;
- to investigate alternative provision/routes and collaboration that will assist disabled students to learn including liaison with the LA Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Team.

The Academy plans to further increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the Academy such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or off-site visits. It also covers the provision of specialist **aids and equipment**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.

The Academy will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEND inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

Furness Academy will arrange to improve access to the curriculum in the following ways:

- arranging and implementing appropriate staff training and development
- the plan will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis by relevant staff and the Local Academy Committee
- ensuring that teaching and learning is accessible through appropriate school and classroom organisation and support, including deployment of staff and resources

Governors should identify action in the Academy access plan to enhance teaching and learning opportunities for all those in the Academy community with disabilities. These may include:

- consideration of whole-school ways of increasing participation in activities such as after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities, as well as off-site visits, particularly for difficult-to-include pupil groups, such as those with physical or behavioural challenges;
- how threats to participation have been analysed using risk assessment proforma and action taken to reduce those identified risks;
- identifying how classroom support arrangements, such as deployment of teaching assistants, provision of ICT, contribute to, and enhance learning opportunities;
- deciding how the implementation of specific strategies such as intervention groups, 1:1 support, specific resources and equipment have enhanced attendance and participation;
- consideration of how classroom/group organisation has been targeted to ensure that all pupils achieved increased levels of Academy success;
- consideration of the Academy response to pupils through the application of the SEND Code of Practice has improved pupil attainment and how effective communication regarding specific pupil needs has been achieved and is monitored;
- consideration of how liaison, increased communication and relationships with external agencies has supported and enhanced pupils' access to the curriculum and how this is monitored and improvements targeted;
- identifying how staff training needs in order to effectively meet the diverse abilities and disabilities of all pupils, including prospective pupils who may require manual handling, signing, personal hygiene support etc. has been identified and supported;

- identifying pupil peer support mechanisms and the ways that the Academy has ensured pupils have a voice in decisions that affect them;
- ensuring that action has been undertaken to ensure that parents and carers see themselves as partners in their children's education and are increasingly willing to actively support their children's education;
- enhancing the positive culture and ethos of the Academy by undertaking quality marks or other additional intervention to improve the Academy's ability to include those with disabilities.

8.2 Improving the physical environment of the Academy to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services

- in consultation with the FET Board investigate various improvements to the site;
- improve accessibility points to different curriculum areas;
- investigate ways of making the site more accessible to both disabled parents and adult users.

Furness Academy will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. This is required regardless of whether the Academy has pupils or visitors with disabilities and is prepared for a situation when they do.

We will ensure that children with learning and/or physical disabilities have easy access to appropriate resources to allow them to access the curriculum, eg. specialist chairs and desks, ICT programs, coloured overlays, enlarged print books etc. These will be provided as and when necessary.

The Local Academy Committee will respond to the action points recorded in Appendix A, depending on priority and will consider and record reflection upon all areas of the physical environment.

8.3 Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are disabled

FURNESS ACADEMY will strive to:

- Develop Academy literature at the correct font size to help visually impaired students and dyslexic students;
- investigate alternative ways of providing access to information, software and activities;
- investigate ways of communicating effectively with disabled parents and carers and other disabled adult users of the site.

Furness Academy will strive to improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities upon request. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and

Information about the Academy and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame. The Academy will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

If and when necessary, Furness Academy will ensure that when writing to its pupils – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events, this could include alternative formats. This information will be made available within a reasonable time frame and take account of the pupils' disabilities and pupils' and parents' preferred formats.

8.4 Financial Planning and Control

The Headteacher with the Senior Leadership Team, together with the Finance Manager will review the financial implications of the Accessibility Plan as part of the normal budget review process. The objective is that over time Accessibility Plan actions will be integrated into the School Improvement Plan.

FURNESS ACADEMY will finance the plan by identifying costs and incorporating them into current and future budget commitments.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Management, Coordination and Implementation

Furness Academy will continue to work with the SENCO and the site manager to ensure the environment meets current needs.

9.2 Monitoring

FURNESS ACADEMY recognises that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning.

Evaluation that **may** be useful to judge success may include:

- *success in meeting identified targets;*
- *changes in physical accessibility of school buildings;*
- *improved levels of confidence in staff in reducing the obstacles to success for pupils with additional needs;*
- *recorded evidence that increased numbers of pupils with disabilities are actively participating in all areas of the Academy;*
- *pupil responses; verbally, pictorially and written that indicate that they feel themselves to be included;*
- *Ofsted inspections that identify higher levels of educational inclusion.*

9.3 The role of the FET Board in increasing accessibility

Furness Education Trust recognises that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to future action planning and budget setting.

Evaluation includes:

- *providing training and awareness opportunities on issues regarding inclusion to staff, governors and parents and how this has been used in the Academy to promote inclusion*
- *promoted collaboration through the provision of information aimed at sharing good practice;*
- *encouraged liaison between special and mainstream schools to share expertise and pupil placement;*
- *ensured that the Academy is aware of support services that provide advice to schools/settings and staff;*
- *provided specialist help to identify ways forward in increasing the inclusion of all pupils;*
- *informed the Academy how information can be provided in a number of different formats.*

9.4 Accessing the Academy's Plan

- *Raising awareness of font size and page layouts will support pupils with visual impairments.*
- *Auditing the Academy library to ensure the availability of large font and easy read texts will improve access.*
- *Auditing signage around the Academy to ensure that is accessible to all is a valuable exercise.*
- *Auditing the use of, and methods of displaying materials around the Academy.*

This will be done through:

- *Access on the Academy website open to all visitors to the site;*
- We will ensure that the plan is available in different formats where requested.*

Furness Academy will achieve successful implementation of the accessibility plan with continued support in the areas of:

- *providing training and awareness opportunities to staff, Governors and parents/carers on issues regarding equality and inclusion;*
- *providing targeted training for particular groups of pupils/staff;*
- *promoting collaboration through the provision of information and the sharing of good practice;*
- *encouraging liaison between other local schools including special schools;*
- *seeking support/advice from outside the Academy, from services, other agencies and organisations;*
- *ensuring that the Academy is aware of all support services that provide advice to schools/settings and staff.*

10. RELATED POLICIES

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum Policies
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Staff Training and Development Plan
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities/ Local Offer Response & Information Report
- Educational Visits
- Whole School Behaviour Policy and Procedures
- School Improvement Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Complaints Procedures

FURNESS ACADEMY Accessibility Plan

In drawing up this Accessibility Plan, the following were consulted:

- *Full Local Academy Committee /SEND Governor*
- *Staff (teaching and support)/SENCo/SLT*
- *Parents/carers/community groups*
- *Pupils/school council*
- *FET*

The plan was approved on:	28/09/2022
Date of Accessibility Plan:	28/09/2022
Date for next Review:	Autumn 2025
Senior Member of staff responsible for the Plan :	Linzi Stanway/Assistant Headteacher
Governors & Committees responsible:	Local Academy Committee

Governing Body is free to delegate the approval of this Plan to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the Head teacher.

FURNESS ACADEMY ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2022 - 2025**IMPROVING THE CURRICULUM ACCESS AT FURNESS ACADEMY**

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
Training for staff in the teaching and support of children with a range of disabilities and other specific learning difficulties.	All staff attend twilight training. Outreach provision from external agencies.	All staff are familiar with the range of strategies to support these learners in the classroom and beyond.	Summer 2023	Children with disabilities are successfully included in all aspects of school life.
All out-of-school and extra-curricular activities are planned to encourage the participation of the whole range of pupils	Discussions with staff on how to enhance equitable access to out of school and extra curricular provision, and to provide support where this is required.	All out-of-school and extra-curricular activities will be conducted in an inclusive environment with providers that comply with all current and future legislative requirements	Spring 2023	Increase in access to all school activities for all disabled pupils
Classrooms are optimally organised to promote the participation and independence of all pupils	Review and implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process in individual class bases	Lessons start on time without the need to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of individual pupils	Summer 2023	Increase in access to the National Curriculum
Training for Awareness Raising of Disability Issues	Provide training for governors, staff, pupils and parents. Discuss perception of issues with staff to determine the current status of school.	School community aware of issues relating to Access	Summer 2023	Society will benefit from a more inclusive school and social environment
Review TA deployment	In review meetings with teaching assistants establish when they are available to support children each day that may be different to their current working hours.	Adult support is available during key times that individual children may need support i.e. lunchtimes, PE lessons, extra-curricular activities.	Reviewed Annually	Children who need individual adult support to participate in some activities have access to this support.

FURNESS ACADEMY ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2022 - 2025
IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ACCESS AT FURNESS ACADEMY

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
Fire and emergency evacuation procedures to be in place for those with additional needs.	<p>Need to regularly review the escape strategy, management controls and staff training needed as appropriate.</p> <p>PEEPs to be developed as required for students with additional needs.</p>	The Academy ensures a PEEP risk assessment is completed (by the responsible person) for identified disabled/special needs student/member of staff who would be in need of help/assistance to evacuate the building safely in the event of a fire	Strategy reviewed termly and PEEPs completed as students/staff join us	PEEPs in place for all identified students and staff.

FURNESS ACADEMY ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2022 - 2025**IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF WRITTEN INFORMATION AT FURNESS ACADEMY**

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME	ACHIEVEMENT
Availability of written material in alternative format when requested	The school will make itself aware of the services available through the LA/Trust for converting written information into alternative formats.	The school will strive to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes	Ongoing	Delivery of information to disabled pupils improved
Make available school brochures, school newsletters and other information for parents in alternative formats when requested	Review all current school publications and promote that on request, the availability in different formats for those that require it	All school information available for all	ongoing	Delivery of school information to parents and the local community improved
Survey parents/carers as to the quality of communication to seek their opinions as to how to improve.	Send out survey to parents regarding quality of communication.	School is more aware of the opinions of parents and acts on this.	Summer 2023	Parental opinion is surveyed and action taken appropriately.