East Midlands Academy Trust

Accessibility Policy 2023/2026

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

Scope: East Midlands Academy Trust & Academies within the Trust	
Version: V2	**Filename:** EMAT Accessibility Policy
Approval: October 2023	**Next Review: September 2026** *This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Trust Board (FHRE)*
Owner: East Midlands Academy Trust Board of Trustees	**Union Status:** Not Applicable

Policy type:	
Statutory	Replaces Academy's current policy

Revision History

Revision Date	Revisor	Description of Revision
October 2023 – V2	R Ryan	Added reference to Equality Act 2010 and updated definitions of disability. Add reference to Head of School responsibilities.

EMAT Accessibility Policy

1. Introduction

Under the Equality Act 2010 all schools should have an Accessibility Plan. The purpose of this plan is to:

- Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable pupils with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities.

East Midlands Academy Trust believe in providing every opportunity to develop pupils, young people and adult's full potential. All our pupils, staff and visitors should feel valued, cared for, listened to and encouraged to challenge themselves to be the best they can. It is our aim to reduce and eliminate barriers to the curriculum, fuller aspects of academy life and the academy environment for pupils and prospective pupils, staff, parents and visitors with a disability.

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the trust ethos, enables consistency and quality across the schools and is related to the following legislation:

- SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA)
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for Organisations Who Work with and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE) and (DoH)
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)

We believe that we work hard to ensure that the culture and ethos of this trust are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treat one another with respect. Each school provides pupils with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates into all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

2. Definitions of disability

According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that is:

- Substantial
- Long term
- Has an adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal everyday activities.

We have a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, eliminate disability related harassment, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage disabled people to participate in school life.

In accordance with good practice guidelines, we strive to increase accessibility in three main areas:

The Physical Environment
We aim to improve and maintain access to the physical environment of each school in the trust, adding specialist facilities as necessary – this covers improvements to the physical environment of the schools and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe.

Availability of information
We aim to improve the availability of accessible information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, newsletters, timetables, textbooks and information about the schools and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

The Curriculum
We aim to 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; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of their duties under the Equalities Act 2010); this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or schools visits – it also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe.

The following policy documents are relevant to the general issue of accessibility.
- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

3. Aims

- To ensure that all school personnel with disabilities are treated fairly in regard to recruitment, performance management, promotion, staff development, teaching environment and access to the school premises.

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access the curriculum and to have full participation in the school community for pupils, prospective pupils and our adult users with a disability.

- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.

- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy

It is a requirement that each academy's Accessibility Plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Each school in the Trust will draw up an Action Plan showing how the school will address priorities identified in the plan. This plan would incorporate the school's intention to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

The Head of each Academy is responsible for the management and implementation of their respective Accessibility Plan. They will work in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer, Site Manager and Senior Leadership Team at their Academy in order to co-ordinate resources.

4. Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed every three years by the Trust Board but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary. It will be reviewed by the Executive Headteacher / Headteacher / Head or School and the Local Advisory Board (LAB).

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Trust Board for further discussion and endorsement.

Trust Accessibility Plan - Improving Physical Environment

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Access: Be aware of the access needs of all pupils/children, staff, governors and parents/carers. Ensure all staff & governors and other volunteers / visitors to the academy are aware of access issues.	Gather data around access needs at the point of transition process or, at the very least, when a child begins at the academy. Create access plans for individuals as required. Annual reminder to parents and carers through communication to let us know if they have problems with access to areas of the academy. Include the accessibility plan as part of induction	Annually or as required September (annually) As required	Executive Headteacher Head of School	Individual, relevant and current information is gathered and shared as required so that all needs are met.
Maintain safe access for all	Check exterior lighting is working on a regular basis. Door locks, security fobs, obstructions to doorways	Ongoing checks – 3 monthly	Executive Headteacher Head of School School caretaker	Everyone feels safe and can gain access safely into the school grounds.
Targets	**Strategies**	**Timescale**	**Responsibility**	**Success Criteria**

Exits: Ensure all people can be safely evacuated.	Ensure there is a personal emergency evacuation plan for any person with a disability.	As required	Executive Headteacher Head of School	All pupils and staff working with them are safe.
Ensure that the academy passes its Fire Safety Audit including training for staff up to date, equipment checks are regular and defect equipment is replaced.	Ensure staff are fully trained and aware of their duties.	Daily	Executive Headteacher Head of School	All personnel and pupils have safe independent exits from academy.
Ensure that the building remains accessible and compliant in line with the Equality Act (2010)	Ensure that any building or maintenance works ensure full compliance with the Equality Act (2010) in relation to access e.g. ramps, visual alarms etc.	As works are undertaken	Trust Board	That the building is accessible and easily travelled by all staff, students, parents/carers, and visitors.

Trust Accessibility Plan - Improve access to information

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Website is compliant with statutory regulations	Annual Website audit undertaken	Annual check	Executive Headteacher Head of School	Compliant website
To improve awareness of alternative formats for sharing information	Using a variety of formats for communication, including text, email and pupil-post. Ensure all parents/carers are aware that the academy can provide communication in large text, via telephone /meetings to meet needs. Check that correspondence sent home is accessible in relation to reading ability language etc.	Ongoing	Executive Headteacher Head of School	All parents/carers become aware of alternatives available and how these can be accessed
Ensure information in all SEND Reviews is accessible, understandable and allows ease of use to all parties.	Provide a choice of formats for pupil's parents/carers to provide views on Reviews.	Ongoing	Executive Headteacher SENDCO	Parents/carers have choices about how they are communicated with and how they provide their points of view.

Trust Accessibility Plan - Improve access to the curriculum

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Curriculum adjustments ensure fair access for all.	Consider the needs of all pupils in the academy when planning lessons and adjust resources accordingly, such as text size, paper colour, writing equipment, classroom position etc. - With consideration for those children with general and specific learning difficulties Ensure all staff have access to the inclusion data of pupils for who they teach to ensure they can plan and deliver to meet their needs. Effective differentiation ensures all pupils can access the curriculum at an appropriate level.	As required in response to pupil need	All staff	All pupils access fully the curriculum provided through quality first teaching Structured conversations as appropriate with parent /carers
Targets	**Strategies**	**Timescale**	**Responsibility**	**Success Criteria**

Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with speech impairment	Promotion of an ethos of inclusion, acceptance and understanding. Demonstration of patience and support. Specific programme as required through liaison with Speech Therapy Service.	As required in response to student need	All staff	Progress confirmed by observations and formal assessment
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with hearing impairment	Quiet and **engaging classrooms**, child facing the teacher, clear enunciation, use of hearing loops (where available) .TA support as required.	As required in response to student need	All staff	Progress confirmed by observations and formal assessment
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with visual impairment	Child faces board, glasses worn. Modified print.	As required in response to student need	All staff	Progress confirmed by observations and formal assessment

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with visual impairment	Child faces board, glasses worn, **consider positioning of children.** Modified print. **Strategies to avoid cognitive overload.** **Visual timetables and now next activities where needed.**	As required in response to student need	All staff	Progress confirmed by observations and formal assessment
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with impaired mobility including wheelchair users.	Support in P.E. Classroom environment, corridors unobstructed pathways and clear of hazards. Doorways wide for wheelchair use, ramps as required. Walking rule in academy. Early exit from classes. **Supported transition through school.**	As required in response to student need	All staff	Children are able to access all activities.
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with emotional and behavioural difficulties	Layout of classroom, time out, clear targets, clear behavioural expectations and visual timetables. **Use of zones of regulation to support pupils. Children to have access to resources which will support – e.g. fidget toys, bean bags. Behaviour Plans in place where needed.**	As required in response to student need	All staff	Progress confirmed by teacher assessment and achieving targets.

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Ensure teaching and learning methods, and the environment support children with ASD.	Layout of classroom, classroom strategies, ensuring the student is prepared for change (e.g.; timetable changes, exam or assessment dates given etc.), using clear unambiguous language (e.g., avoid using sarcasm or using idioms, using clear, concise instructions. **Use of now and next boards to aid transition.**	As required in response to student need	All Staff	Progress confirmed by observations and formal assessment
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with diagnosed medical conditions e.g. asthma, allergies	Individual Health Care Plan to be followed. Accessibility of medication. Awareness of staff when planning DT, PE, Science activities.	Awareness for the subject specific lessons and PE	All Staff	All pupils able to access the activities.
Necessary provision is in place to allow all pupils to access extra-curricular opportunities	Pre preparation meetings with parents and carers to make all necessary additional arrangements. Risk assessments to be in place.	As required in response to pupil need	All Staff	All pupils access fully the curriculum provided

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Improve oral, literacy and numeracy levels of pupils achieving below age expectations	Identify pupils who require additional support. Provide appropriate interventions and differentiation for learning.	Weekly	All Staff	Progress confirmed.
Ensure all pupils can access public examinations, statutory assessments and internal assessments.	Approved access arrangements in place for all pupils who require and are eligible for support, including, readers, separate rooming etc. Ensuring that there is evidence of the student's normal way of working in the classroom that comply with regulations.	For all exam/ assessment series	All Staff	All students that have approved access arrangements can fully access all exams and statutory assessments