



Tall Oaks Academy Trust

POLICY

Disability and Accessibility

May 2021

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Authorised by: Mrs Sue Wilson Executive Head teacher

Disability and Accessibility Policy

Introduction

Tall Oaks Academy Trust is committed to a fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of disablement. The Trust and all schools within it will welcome applications from people with disabilities to join the Trust community as pupils and staff.

The school sites have been designed and refurbished to have provision and accessibility for people with disabilities so that they may be integrated fully into school and Trust life. The curriculum is designed so that it may be delivered to provide flexible and equal access to all pupils, 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 pupils 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 pupils have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of the school and the Trust;
- the views of individual pupils or staff are taken into account at all times when their requirements are being assessed;
- all pupils are fully integrated into the school 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 pupils, have appropriate information, support and training;

- the Trust takes steps to enable staff and pupils who become disabled during their time at the school 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 different school sites;
- so far as is reasonably practicable, the school premises are accessible and safe for disabled people; and
- no disabled pupil or staff member is treated less favourably as a result of their disability.

Implementation

The Head of Inclusion and Heads of School will be responsible for ensuring that staff and parents are made aware of this policy and have the responsibility to ensure that the Disability Code of Practice set out below is followed. (Throughout this policy, the term “parents” means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)

The Executive Head teacher and the Board of Trustees will have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy statement is implemented.

Disability Code of Practice

Environment

Any future building projects will be considered at the planning stage for accessibility and usability by people with disabilities.

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

Pupils

Applications will be considered in line with the published admission arrangements for all pupils. An applicant’s disability will not prevent him/her from being offered a place and integrated into the school unless:

- the content, structure and delivery of the curriculum are such that the pupil would be prevented from fulfilling a major part of it; or

- the school would be unable to provide suitably trained staff or facilities to allow the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Tall Oaks Academy Trust Curriculum to be met.

The schools will aim to provide pupils with a disability, with the appropriate support to enable them to be fully integrated. The schools will not treat a pupil with a disability less favourably than any other pupil and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the full participation and integration of disabled pupils. Teaching assistants will support teaching staff as required to help ensure that disabled pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

As far as resources allow, the needs of disabled pupils 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 pupil cannot fully participate, alternative provision will be made.

Pupils with a disability or who become disabled whilst studying at the school 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 and an Individual Education Plan drawn upon an annual basis.

The schools recognise that special arrangements may be required to enable pupils with disabilities, including specific learning difficulties, to exhibit their capabilities and knowledge. Special arrangements will be made to enable such pupils to perform to the best of their ability by meeting their individual needs. The schools will liaise with the relevant examination bodies in such instances. Pupils and parents will be made fully aware of the process for making special arrangements for assessment and examinations by the Head of School in liaison with the class teacher.

Staff

Wherever practicable, the Trust and its schools 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 Trust at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher and Board of Trustees, 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 Trust 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 Trust 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 Trust will ensure that a programme of training is offered to staff to increase their awareness of pupils with disabilities and inform them of appropriate action to be taken when delivering the curriculum.

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 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).