

Accessibility Policy

Freemantle C.E. Community Academy



Reviewed by:	Kevin Barnett	Date: June 2025
Approved by:		
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1. Introduction

It is our intention to remove, as far as we can, those barriers which make it hard for children and adults with a disability to take part in the day to day life of our school and benefit from the educational experiences and services we provide.

We aim to ensure that our school is a welcoming place that understands and responds effectively to children and adults with disabilities and we recognise the importance of a review and planning procedure associated with continuous development and improvement.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a *'physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*

This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEND, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEND.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- They must not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person's disability
- They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
- This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.
- Schools are allowed to treat disabled children / young people more favourably than non-disabled children / young people, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments and making changes to practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what the school's offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can i.e. to put them on a more level footing with children / young people without disabilities
- Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people. Public bodies also have specific duties under the public sector equality duty and must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and must prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty. Objectives must be specific and measurable.

The duties cover discrimination in the provision of services and the provision of education, including admissions and exclusions. All providers must make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices and by the provision of auxiliary aids and services.

School governing bodies and proprietors must also publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and their accessibility plans.

2. The Responsible Body

The Board of Directors must prepare—

- an accessibility plan;
- further plans at such times as may be prescribed.

The accessibility plan is a plan for, over a prescribed period—

A; increasing the extent to which disabled children / young people can participate in the school's curriculum

B: improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled children / young people are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and

improving the delivery to disabled children / young people—

- (i) within a reasonable time, and
- (ii) in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents, of information which is provided in writing for children / young people who are not disabled.

An accessibility plan must be in writing.

- During the period to which the plan relates, the responsible body must keep its accessibility plan under review and, if necessary, revise it.
- It is the duty of the responsible body to implement its accessibility plan.

Schools have had a duty to produce an accessibility plan since September 2002.

The Statutory Policies for Schools (Sept 2014) states that it is a requirement that maintained schools, academies, free schools, independent schools, sixth-form colleges, further education colleges and Pupil Referral Units must review their accessibility plan every three years. It also states that approval should be by the governing body however, they are free to delegate the approval right to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the head teacher.

Other relevant legislation, regulations & guidance;

Children & Families Act (2014)

The Special Educational Needs & Disability Regulations (2014)

The SEND Code of Practice (revised April 2015)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012)

Disability Discrimination Order (2006)

The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice: Protecting the vulnerable (2005)

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 & 3

DfES *"Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils"*

Health Standards (England) Regulations 2003

3. The Academy Context

We are an academy for children / young people who age from 3 years to 11 years. The academy comprises of 2 buildings covering a small site, mostly of two storey construction.

In the years 2024/25, we had 2 children / young people identified as having a physical disability under the given definition. (Not including those diagnosed with ASD, ADHD or similar neuro-diversity)

4. Academies Aims

As a member of the team at Freemantle staff will work in partnership with colleagues to support the academy in developing high expectations for work, behaviour, social, emotional, cultural, physical and spiritual needs.

Colleagues will:

- Be aware of, and implement, the social and learning aims and policies of the academy.
- Ensure that a high-quality standard of care and education is maintained at all times for all pupils.
- Take a shared responsibility for all pupils in the academy environment.
- Create a purposeful working environment which is well organised, stimulating, attractive and safe.
- Contribute to collective decision making in a constructive manner.
- Enter into dialogue at an appropriate professional level with all my colleagues.
- Be enthusiastic, positive and be open to new ideas and suggestions.
- Whenever possible be creative in ensuring the pupil's day is fun and enjoyable whilst recognising the requirements of national strategies need to be met.
- Show commitment and be responsible for my own professional development and learning.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Ensure that the academy develops and maintains good relationships with parents, carers and the local community.

5. Formulating the Accessibility Plan

The priorities for the Accessibility Plan for our academy are identified by a planning group who consisted of:

- **SEN Director**
- **Executive Officer**
- **Headteacher**
- **SENCO**
- **Office manager**

Process

Our accessibility plan has been developed as follows:

- 1) Access audit and review of current activities completed
- 2) Actions to eliminate barriers identified (with short-term, medium term and long-term targets).
- 3) Goals and targets set which can be measured & include time frames.
- 4) Consultation with academy staff, directors and other bodies i.e. parents/ carers,
- 5) The Plan's contents checked.
- 6) Publication of the plan.
- 7) Implemented the plan and allocated adequate resources.
- 8) Evaluated the plan every 3 years (with the accessibility plan under on-going review and revision as necessary).

In addition to this we will;

- continually review the environment of the academy, the way we plan, prepare and deliver curriculum and the information we provide for children / young people so that we can improve the access for both individuals and groups;
- work to provide an atmosphere where all children / young people feel safe and valued;
- promote understanding of disability and work to show positive models of people with a disability. We will avoid stereotypes and use language which emphasises the person rather than the disability.
- examine those parts of our prescribed, active and extra-curricular activities which may have limited access for children / young people with a disability and see if it is possible to provide learning experiences which promote similar development of knowledge and understanding.

6. Accessing the Plan

The plan will be available in the following ways-

- ***Published on the academy website***
- ***Made available in a range of font sizes in paper format upon request***
- ***Translation facilities on the website for electronic documents***

Other Academy Policies & Documentation

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

- Curriculum
- Equal Opportunities
- Health & Safety (including off-site safety)
- Inclusion
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Management
- Raising Attainment Plan
- Academy handbook and Mission Statement
- The Academy's Complaints Procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

Attached is a set of audits and action plans relating to the key aspects of accessibility.

7. Audits and Action Plans

Access Audit- revised- May 2025

Date: 9th May 2025

Lead member of staff: Kevin Barnett

Section 1 The academy can deliver the curriculum to all children / young people. Give details of items developed, current practise and things to be developed.

Position Statement	Fully	Part	Not	Plan Prompt
Teachers and assistants have trained to teach and support disabled children / young people. Staff are confident about meeting the needs of children / young people with a disability.	x			Where additional support is required, bespoke training will be sought
All academy staff and the directors have had access to training on disability equality and inclusion.	x			Forms part of annual training
We take advice to ensure our classrooms are optimally organised and resourced for disabled children / young people.	x			
Positive images of people with different abilities are apparent in the classrooms and the academy generally.		x		Within displays and when the curriculum lends itself directly
Staff plan alternative ways of providing experience and understanding of parts of the curriculum. i.e. All children / young people are encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities. Alternative forms of exercise are given in PE and games for disabled children / young people.	x			Scaffolds are used to aid pupil access to the curriculum and the site

Lessons are responsive to diversity. Lessons allow children / young people to work individually, with a partner, in groups and whole class. There is extensive peer support and collaborative learning in support of those with a learning disability.	x			Regularly presented proactively within mainstream lessons and reactively where issues or opportunities arise
When planning the deployment of additional adults, there is a consideration of pupils with disabilities so that if needed, they benefit from high staffing ratios and smaller group activities in order to ensure their inclusion and raise attainment.	x			Within the confines of the staffing structure
Staff recognise and allow for the mental effort/additional time required by some disabled children / young people, e.g. using lip reading, processing time for children / young people with Social Communication Difficulties.	x			
When renewing computer hardware and software, machines and materials are chosen to support children / young people with a disability, e.g. vocalising braille, touch screen, assistive technology.	x			Reviewed at curriculum planning meetings and with administered by alphascan
Provision of laptops or e-devices are considered to aid recording and / or communication.	x			
Outside visits are subject to a regular review to ensure increased levels of access or alternative experience.	x			Pre-visits are encouraged to enable all pupils to participate
The academy links with other schools to share good practice.	x			Via SCLT and the PLN
Staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation. When curriculum units are developed the originators always ask if there could be a disability dimension.	x			Modifications are made when required to support learners
Access arrangements are used when appropriate to support children / young people with accessing assessments.	x			
The academy signposts children and families to further support e.g. Together Information Exchange, ASCETs, SENDIASS, Early Help, ISEA, etc.	x			
A director takes particular interest in, and responsibility for promoting disability awareness and inclusion.	x			As part of safeguarding and equalities act

Section 2: The academy is designed to meet the needs of all children.

Statement	Fully	Part	Not	Plan Prompt
The size and layout of areas allow access for all children / young people, including wheelchair users.	x			Where reasonable adjustment is required this is undertaken
In considering the academy budget there is a clear plan to improve access and resources for those with a disability.	x			This is dwindling due to funding implications
There is a plan which shows priorities for major and minor works, costed and included in the Raising Attainment Plan.	x			As part of the DAMP
The academy has procedures to ensure the rigorous maintenance of specialist equipment and facilities.	x			
Emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform all pupils including children with SEND, including alarms with both visual and auditory components.	x			

Personal Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in place to provide people with any form of disability, who cannot be adequately protected by the standard fire safety provisions within a premise, with a similar level of safety from the effects of fire as all other occupants.			x	These are noted as part of evacuation and emergency policies but not formally recorded
With regards to ' <i>Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014)</i> ', there a policy in place for the effective and safe administration of medication. Personal hygiene and medical issues are dealt with full attention to the safety and dignity of all concerned i.e. children / young people taking medication, those with limited toileting training.	x			
Pathways of travel around the academy site and parking arrangements are safe. Disabled parking spots are available.	x			
There is a positive attitude to the recruitment and employment of staff with a disability and a good knowledge about the levels of support they are entitled to.	x			
Furniture and equipment is selected, adjusted and located appropriately. Steps are taken to reduce the background noise for HI children and advice sought from other agencies to take appropriate measures in the classroom.	x			
The décor and / or signage is not confusing or disorientating for children with a visual impairment, Social Communication Difficulties or epilepsy. Colour schemes provide colour & tonal contrast for VI children. Labels and signs are presented pictorially and in written word if needed for people with a disability.	x			

Section 3: The academy delivers materials in other formats.

Statement	Fully	Part	Not	Plan Prompt
Information is provided in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in braille for children and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with forms of printed information.	x			
Information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly or people with disabilities e.g. reading aloud, wide interactive screens and describing diagrams.	x			
ICT facilities are used to produce written information in different formats as appropriate.	x			
Staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities. External agencies have raised staff awareness i.e. VI, HI, ASCETS, occupational / physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, school nurses, Health visitor.	x			
There is an effective process to deal with both complaints and positive suggestions from the parents of children with a disability.	x			

8. Planning Template

Access Planning Template for Period 2024- 2027

Lead member of staff: Kevin Barnett

Date: 9th May 2025

Date of Review: 9th May 2025

The main priorities in our access plan focus on:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled children / young people can participate in the academy curriculum.
- Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled children / young people can take advantage of education and associated services.
- Improving the delivery to disabled children / young people of information that is provided in writing for children / young people who are not disabled.

The Academy will monitor the implementation of the plan and keep under review the access needs of the school.

	Focus/Objective	Action	Leads	Time frame	Cost	Outcome/Review Evaluation
Short Term	<i>Consider additional opportunities for improved awareness of disabilities within the curriculum</i>	<i>Academy staff identify where additional inputs and examples can be added in curr planning</i>	<i>SENCO Headteacher All staff</i>	<i>Summer 2</i>	<i>Time from staff</i>	<i>Specific focus on pupil SW whose needs are increasing exponentially</i>
Med Term	<i>Incorporation of appropriate colour schemes when refurbishing to benefit children with visual impairments or sensory overload issues</i>	<i>All staff to consider colour schemes especially in relation to pupils with additional sensory needs</i>	<i>HT All staff</i>	<i>Spring 2026</i>	<i>New resources etc.</i>	<i>All wall boards are plain and not 'busy'. Where necessary trip hazards and potential visual acuity problems are identified and actions taken i.e. colour contrasts</i>
Long Term	<i>The academy plans to improve access to designated areas over successive financial years.</i>	<i>RAP to include areas where accessibility is an issue and consider improves for the next three years</i>	<i>Exec Officer Headteacher Site manager Directors Members</i>	<i>ongoing</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Review all areas for H&S and amend areas as required</i>
	<i>Due to increasing need and neuro-diversity, an increased focus on accessibility needs to be considered in the medium term. Government directives (May 2025) suggest reductions in EHCP's in mainstream school and academies, this will directly impact on the accessibility, curriculum offer and health & safety implications for pupils and staff.</i>	<i>Review all areas as decisions become legislation or government 'expected'</i>	<i>ExO HT Site Team All staff</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Review all areas for and amend areas as required</i>