

Accessibility Policy & Plan

Expansive Learning Wigan School

2023/24

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Version 7

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1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff at Expanse Learning Wigan School (Hereafter referred to as the School).

2. Background

On 1 October 2012, The Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools.

The Act makes it unlawful for Expanse Learning School, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a student or potential student in relation to:

- admissions;
- the way we provide education for students;
- the way we provide students access to any benefit, facility or service;
- subjecting students to any other detriment.

The protected characteristics are:

- sex;
- race;
- disability;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity;

Our Accessibility Plan outlines how we intend to improve access for disabled students to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information.

The Equality Act applies to all schools in England and Wales. (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, Paragraph 3 and Disability Discrimination regulations 2005) Furthermore, as Governors, we are required to draw up equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Accessibility Plan is reviewed every three years.

3. Disability Discrimination Act

The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:

- the definition of disability is less restrictive;
- direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified;
- failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified;
- from September 2012, we are under a duty to make available auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments, where these are not being supplied through a Statement of Special Educational Needs or from other sources.

4. Definition of Disability

The Act defines disability as when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Some specific conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV are considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.

Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least twelvemonths

5. Reasonable Adjustments

We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled student, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces compared to other non-disabled students.

Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (i.e. via an EHC Plan) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.

There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and specialist software.

Our SEND policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our school. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.

Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision; e.g. hearing aids.

We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled students will involve little or no cost or disruption and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three-year Accessibility Plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.

It is our aim to ensure that disabled students play as full a part as possible in school life and our Accessibility Plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other students, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*. For example, if a geography school trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled student could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other students.

6. Our Vision

We believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, valued and respected, and to have high aspirations for their future.

Inclusion is the process of taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy school life.

7. Our Duty around Accessibility for Disabled Students

Our Accessibility Plan is outlined below.

Our Accessibility Plan focuses on the following areas for implementation: -

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum;
- Improving the physical environment to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

Our Plan also includes the resource implications of implementing the Plan.

Our approach includes the following areas:

- **Physical facilities** – addressing any alterations that may be required to the structure of the building or site to establish access for students, staff, parents and visitors
- **School Curriculum** – including our provision for teaching and learning, the wider curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and school visits
- **Support Services** – access to services within and external to the school to support families where disability is identified.
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Physical Facilities

Process for Identifying barriers:

- Action plan following a site inspection by relevant personnel for example Wigan Council or a member of the Shared Services team.
- On-going feedback from individual students / staff.
- Transitional arrangements to identify needs of individual students and to incorporate them into their individual students plan.
- Individual Expanse Learning Wigan School risk assessments and plans developed and available to all staff.
- Head of Care / Pastoral Team to oversee all relevant EHC Plans including regular review, partner liaison, ensuring that updates are shared with all relevant staff as linked documents.

Summary of facilities / progress to date:

- Disabled parking bays and drop off area on car park adjacent to reception - single level and unloading /wheelchair accessible.
- All School building areas are fully accessible.
- Sensory Room built, and venting system installed.
- Fully accessible training kitchen installed.
- Disabled toilet and 2x hygiene suites completed (wet rooms with full disabled access).
- Disabled toilet available, including emergency cords.
- Secure building system and cameras installed, monitoring station in SLT office.
- NPS checked auditory environment which has good acoustics in the majority of classrooms
- Multi-sports pitch installed to reduce the instances of slips trips and falls
- INventory signing in system installed, adaptable text and accessibility options, adjustable height levels for the console
- Accessible Poly Tunnel for outdoor education installed, one level, multi height beds.
- Walking track installed around the school field
- External signage improved
- Additional sensory room added
- Additional 1.1 teaching space/counselling room installed
- Additional food choice items added to the menu
- Strengthened the School SLT through the introduction of the Pastoral Manager Role.
- Secured the Disability Confident charter mark
- Secured the Restraint Reduction Techniques charter mark
- Secured Matrix Accreditation

Objectives for improvement 2023/24:

- To secure the Elklan Communication charter mark
- To secure the National Nurturing Schools charter mark
- Some external and internal floor markings are in place to support students with visual impairment.
- Ensure Emergency Evacuation Plans continue to be written when required for individual students.
- Ensure accessibility requirements are considered with all future refurbishment projects.
- Expanse Learning School are a responsive site and will put in place all feasible actions as identified by individuals.

Monitoring of plans:

- This plan will be monitored termly through a site inspection by the Head of Shared Services, Governing Body, and School SLT.

Support Services

Process for Identifying barriers:

- Pastoral Team manage all referral information and undertake detailed pre-attendance and initial assessments to ensure the needs of students are identified with student, family and partners via discussions, observations and a specific learning plan constructed for each student.
- Pastoral Team manage all relevant EHC Plans including regular review, partner liaison, ensuring that updates are shared with all relevant staff as linked documents, including Annual Review, PEEP's etc.
- Effective communication and established relationship with Wigan Local Authority and with relevant specialist support services.

Summary of facilities / progress to date:

- Expanse Learning School works proactively with students and families; we have established relationships with a wide range of partners: SALT/ TESS / Health / CAMHS / OT /Complex Needs team / Special Schools.
- Pastoral Team carefully plan allocated time for support work and time to support our young people; this established Multi-Agency approach supports management and development of support plans for students with regular reviews.
- Pastoral Team have expertise and access to specialist services ensuring we are able to provide relevant information, support and strategies for teaching students with SEND, SEMH and/or medical conditions.
- All Staff Team undertake relevant training, CPD to support effective classroom and student management.

Objectives for improvement 2023/24:

- Continue to Quality Assure the role of all agencies working with our students and families.
- Continue to develop a proactive Multi Agency Approach to supporting students.
- Establish additional Residential opportunities for students.
- Ensure Databridge records on student's needs and all support plans are entered onto the system and all staff have immediate access to better support students on a day to day basis.
- Ensure the implementation of the Boxall system of assessments to better support students within the Nurture Provision with more effective social and emotional targets and strategies.
- Improve our communication/provisions of information with parents and other key stakeholders from an accessibility perspective

Monitoring of plans:

- This plan is to be monitored annually by SLT, the Governing Body and other relevant staff.

School Curriculum**Process for Identifying barriers:**

- Expanse SLT and Governors monitor the quality of teaching and learning support and impact on progress through observations (OTLA), work scrutiny, student voice, case conferences and the use of external consultants.
- BKSB utilised for literacy and numeracy baseline assessment and ongoing controlled assessment and testing for students.
- NOCN qualifications for Personal and Social Skills Development are used to support students to develop personally and socially and their skills for employment.
- Boxall system of assessments are used to better support some students with more effective social and emotional targets and strategies.
- All students complete a personalised passport document to help identify barriers and set challenging, aspirational targets.

Summary of facilities / progress to date:

- Laptops and I-Pads are available within Expanse Learning School to enhance the learning process, and to assist identified students with handwriting and recording difficulties.
- Classes have dedicated specialist support staff as needed.
- Curriculum is differentiated to ensure that students have access to appropriate level of curriculum.
- Expanse Learning School provide appropriate sensory processing aids for specific students based on assessed needs.
- Expanse Learning School works within the JCQ guidelines to put into place Access Arrangements.
- Classroom based support and intervention can take place in one to one, small group or whole class settings.
- Expanse Learning current staff team have established expertise and training to support the most vulnerable students.
- Introduced the role of SEND intervention teacher.
- Soundwrite training completed for key staff

Objectives for improvement 2023/24:

- Continually review the curriculum offer in light of national and local practice / policy.
- Improve upon weaknesses identified during inspection (March 2022)
- Review the interventions provided for individuals and classes as part of the on-going quality cycle.
- Provision of specialist equipment to be reviewed and provided on a case by case basis.
- Continue modification of learning materials to ensure resources are accessible.
- Adequately resource technology to support all students in accessing the curriculum.
- Continue to develop student voice and wider stakeholder feedback to drive effectiveness.
- Continue to offer through Performance Management, CPD to enable staff to support the full range of needs of students.

Monitoring of plans:

- This plan to be monitored annually by SLT and teaching teams and any other relevant staff.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the governing board

Impact of non-compliance:

Staff:	Disciplinary action, prosecution
Student:	Not applicable
Legislation/organisational:	Reputational damage, litigation, statutory and non-regulated compliance. prosecution
Compliance lead:	Headteacher
Policy Reference:	ELWS-HSEW-POL-0006_(Sep23)
Version:	7
Agreed policy location:	Company Website and Employee Intranet
Review Schedule:	12 months
Does the policy require Governor approval?	No

Approval

Prepared by Ed Hanley 22/08/2023  Headteacher	Approved by Tony Brown 22/08/2023  CEO	Counter Signatory Richard King 22/08/2023  Director of Schools, Pre 16 Education
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Version Control

Version	Date	Revision	Review Date
1	01/08/2018	First Issue	01/09/2019
2	01/09/2019	Policy review and transferred onto the new policy template	31/08/2020

3	01/09/2020	Policy review and progress noted/new targets set	31/08/2021
4	01/09/2021	Policy reviewed	31/08/2022
5	01/10/2022	Policy Reviewed	01/05/2023
6	05/05/2023	Policy Reviewed	05/09/2023
7	22/08/2023	Policy reviewed and updated	21/08/2024