

Accessibility Plan

This policy is effective for all schools within The Mead Educational Trust, the Teaching School, the SCITT and all other activities under the control of the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board.

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Ratified by:	Board of Trustees
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Revision History:

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes:
1.0	18/12/2019	EM	New Trust Template for Accessibility Plan
2.0	19/01/2024	MO	Review of policy. Appendix 2: specialist equipment checklist for schools with DSPs.
3.0	27/02/2026	MO	- Section 1 - Updated to explicitly include: Designated Specialist Provisions (DSPs), special schools and internal alternative provision. - Section 2: Added 2.2 to strengthen of Equality Act (2010) reasonable adjustments. - Section 3: Expanded Action Plan examples to include mobility, surface transitions and specialist vocational environments. - Appendix 2 Fully revised to reflect specialist accessibility and environmental standards, and to apply consistent assurance expectations across DSPs, special schools and internal alternative provision.

Accessibility Plan

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1. Aims

- 1.1. This Accessibility Plan applies to all schools and provisions within The Mead Educational Trust, including mainstream schools, Designated Specialist Provisions (DSPs), special schools, and any internal alternative provision operated by the Trust.
- 1.2. Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to:
 - Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
 - Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
 - Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils
 - The Trust recognises that pupils educated within DSPs, special schools and internal alternative provision often present with comparable levels of complexity, risk and need. As such, the Trust is committed to applying consistent expectations, standards and assurance arrangements across all such provisions.
- 1.3. Our school aims to treat all its pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind.
- 1.4. At Orchard Mead Academy we work together to Make a Positive Difference, to ourselves, to others and to our world. This means we support all our students to aim for the highest standards, not just in lessons and examinations, but also in extra-curricular activities. Students are also encouraged to become involved in charitable activity and to actively help others. We take collective responsibility to make Orchard Mead Academy, Leicester and the wider world a better place.
- 1.5. Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.
- 1.6. The school supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan.
- 1.7. Our school's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, this procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

- 1.8. We have included a range of stakeholders in the development of this accessibility plan, including pupils, parents, staff and governors of the school.
- 1.9. The plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request.

2. Legislation and guidance

- 2.1. This document meets the requirements of [schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010](#) and the Department for Education (DfE) [guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010](#).
- 2.2. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Trust will make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce any substantial disadvantage experienced by disabled pupils. This duty applies equally across all Trust provisions, including internal alternative provision.
- 2.3. The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on his or her ability to undertake normal day to day activities.
- 2.4. Under the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#), 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.
- 2.5. Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.
- 2.6. This policy complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

3. Action plan

3.1. This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Aim	Current good practice <i>Include established practice and practice under development</i>	Objectives <i>State short, medium and long-term objectives</i>	Actions to be taken	Person responsible	Date to complete actions by	Success criteria
Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability	Our school offers a differentiated curriculum for all pupils. We use resources tailored to the needs of pupils who require support to access the curriculum. Curriculum resources include examples of people with disabilities. Curriculum progress is tracked for all pupils, including those with a disability. Targets are set effectively and are appropriate for pupils with additional needs. The curriculum is reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils	<u>On-Going Objectives:</u>	Advise staff within school what a particular child's needs are, for example, teachers will need to ensure font size, layout and coloured paper or overlays allows curriculum material to be easily read	SENCO	Ongoing	Equality of access to the curriculum.
		Ensure curriculum materials accessible				Equality of access to the curriculum.
		Specialist, auxiliary aids and equipment (Including for PE)	Provide specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment to students.	SENCO	Ongoing	Equality of access to the curriculum.
		New students	Review student records ensuring awareness of disabilities of new students.	SENCO	Ongoing	Equality of access to the curriculum.

		Enable access for all to school trips. Library Access - Audit current stock. Discuss needs with school library service. Plan for purchases of additional books where necessary.	Trips locations to be assessed and risk assessments inclusive for disabled access. Ensure transport has suitable facilities. TAs who are child centred to go on trips with particular pupils to which they are normally attached. Audit the school library to ensure availability of large font and easy read texts	EVC/SENCO Librarian/Reading Coordinator	Ongoing Ongoing - annually	All students eligible attend the trips and are supported throughout.
Improve and maintain access to the physical environment	The environment is adapted to the needs of pupils as required, this includes: School well sign-posted. Disabled parking bays located within the car park. Easy access to the main school building directly from the car park, with clear signs leading to the main reception area of the school.	Internal doors to be made easier to operate by wheelchair users. Ramps to replace steps on all external access doors and fire doors.	EVAC training: List of trained staff shared with all teachers Installation of push button opening mechanism on doors throughout the academy.	Site Manager Site Manager	When reasonably practicable When reasonably practicable	Fully compliant buildings and grounds Fully compliant buildings and grounds

	The reception desk is low enough for wheelchair users to speak with the receptionist. Parents of Students with identified needs can use the staff car park and pupils access school through the staff gate / main reception Disabled Changing Areas have pull cords hanging near the showers. Lift to allow wheelchair users access to the upper level of the school - buttons located at the height of our wheelchair users. Inclusive after school clubs provided for all students. Outdoor seating area - plenty of room for wheelchair users to sit at the tables. Disabled toilets located in all blocks and, in general, well signed and include toilet safety handle bars, sink, hand dryer and an emergency pull cord. Dining hall and hall seating - good open seating area. Chairs can be moved in order to allow wheelchair users access.	Evacuation from upper levels.	Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in place for all disabled students and staff.	SEND Officer (Students) / HR Admin (Staff)	Ongoing	Safety of students improved during emergencies.
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	Good wheelchair access to areas such as the Design Rooms, Library and Music Room. Corridors - a one -way system which helps to keep people moving round. Walking on the left / QUICK corridors where one way systems are not in place Classrooms - spacious. Furniture could be moved if necessary to allow easy access for wheelchair users to manoeuvre independently. Good standard of daylight throughout the school. All DSP and vocational teaching rooms provide the same level of access, space and lighting. DSP and Construction spaces are accessible to all.					
Improve the delivery of information to pupils with a disability	Our school uses a range of communication methods to ensure information is accessible. This includes: • Internal signage • Large print resources • Pictorial or symbolic representations	To enable improved access to written information.	Raising awareness of font size and page layout. Audit signage around the school to ensure it is accessible to all. Induction loops to be installed	SENCO Site Manager Site Manager	Ongoing Ongoing - annually When reasonably practicable	All Stakeholders with disabilities have equal access to information

4. Monitoring arrangements

- 4.1. This document will be reviewed every three years, or sooner where changes in provision, pupil need or risk profile require.
- 4.2. It will be approved by the TMET Board of Trustees, and the Principal on behalf of the school
- 4.3. Specialist accessibility requirements for DSPs, special schools and internal alternative provision are set out in Appendix 2. Compliance with these standards, including completion of the specialist accessibility and environment checks, will be reviewed as part of Trust-wide quality assurance processes. Findings will be reported through governance, safeguarding and health and safety routes and will inform prioritisation of remedial action.

5. Links with other policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- SEND Information Report
- TMET Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Administration of Medicine Policy
- Trust Quality Assurance Framework for DSPs and Specialist Provision.

Appendix 1: Accessibility audit

Feature	Description	Actions to be taken	Person responsible	Date to complete actions by
Number of storeys	Main Building Three-storey building with lift access to upper floors. All of curriculum areas accessible. Science Block Two-storey building with lift access to upper floors. IT Block One-storey Sports Hall One-storey	Monitor lift maintenance and ensure contingency plans in place if lift unavailable.	Site Manager	On going
Corridor access	Corridors generally wide and suitable for wheelchair access. Canteen area in main building congested during peak times	Review high-traffic areas and consider staggered movement where needed	SLT	On going
Lifts	Lift available with controls at accessible height. Used by students and staff with mobility needs.	Ensure regular servicing and staff awareness of emergency procedures	Site Manager	On going
Parking bays	Designated disabled parking available close to main entrance. Parents of students with needs can access staff car park.	Review signage and ensure bays remain clearly marked and enforced.	Business and Operations Manager	Annual Review
Entrances	Main entrance accessible with step-free access. Clear signage to reception. Alternative entrances used where required.	Improve signage to highlight accessible routes for visitor	BOM/Site Manager	Autumn Term 2026

Ramps	Some ramps in place; not all external access points fully ramped. Large wide ramp into IT Block	Install ramps to remaining entrances and fire exits where feasible.	BOM/Site Manager	When reasonable practical.
Toilets	Disabled toilets available in all blocks with appropriate facilities (grab rails, alarms).	Regular checks of alarm cords and maintenance of facilities	Site Manager	On going
Reception area	Reception desk accessible for wheelchair users. Clear access from entrance.	Consider hearing loop installation	BOM/Site Manager	Spring Term 2027
Internal signage	Signage in place across school. Some use of pictorial support.	Audit signage to ensure consistency, visibility and accessibility for all users.	BOM/Site Manager	Annual review
Emergency escape routes	Evacuation plans in place including PEEPs for identified individuals. Staff trained in evacuation procedures.	Continue staff training and ensure all PEEPs are up to date and regularly reviewed.	Student Receptionist/BOM	On going

Appendix 2: Accessibility and Environmental Standards for Specialist Provisions

This appendix sets out the accessibility and environmental standards required for all Designated Specialist Provisions (DSPs), special schools within The Mead Educational Trust (including Netherhall Special School), and any internal alternative provision operated by Trust schools. These provisions support pupils with significant and complex needs and therefore require enhanced expectations relating to safety, accessibility, environment, equipment and Equality Act compliance.

Compliance with these standards forms part of Trust-wide quality assurance arrangements and will inform the prioritisation of any remedial actions identified.

1. General Internal and External Environment Checks

1.1 Specialist settings must maintain an internal and external environment that is safe, developmentally appropriate, and aligned to the needs of their pupils. Environmental assurance should consider:

- Finger guards in place where required.
- Access control systems operational and appropriate to pupil need.
- Any CCTV systems are fully operational and clearly signposted.
- Radiators and hot pipes are protected and do not present a burn risk.
- Fixture, fittings & equipment are in a safe, secure and appropriate for the age, size and needs of user.
- Windows fitted with suitable opening restrictors.
- Play and outdoor equipment suitable for the development stage and physical needs of current users.

2. Mobility, Surface and Transition Safety

2.1 Specialist settings often support pupils who use mobility aids, including wheelchairs, walkers and gait trainers. In line with Equality Act requirements, reasonable adjustments must ensure safe navigation of all areas. Consideration should be given to:

- Pathways, thresholds and surface transitions (including grass-to-path interfaces)
- Gradient, edging, tactile or visual markings and route contrast.
- Frequency of inspection and prompt remediation of uneven, degraded or temporary surfaces.

2.2 This is of particular importance within special school environments, where pupils may require close supervision and specialist equipment to move safely.

3. Specialist Curriculum and Vocational Areas

3.1 Where specialist or vocational curriculum areas are delivered (e.g. hairdressing, construction and other practical or trade-based learning), settings must ensure that:

- Height-adjustable or adapted workstations, seating and access points where required.
- Accessible and adapted tools appropriate to pupils with physical, sensory or cognitive needs.

- Activity-specific risk assessments covering equipment, environment and supervision levels.
- Staff training to ensure industry-standard equipment is safely adapted and supervised for SEND learners.

4. Risk Assessment Requirements

4.1 Specialist settings must ensure that risk assessments are comprehensive, reflective of pupil need and reviewed at appropriate intervals. As a minimum, these must include:

- Classroom risk assessment
- Open / play area risk assessment
- Individual pupil risk assessment reflecting specific needs and reasonable adjustments
- Activity-specific risk assessments (e.g. cooking, construction, hairdressing, off-site learning)

5. Perimeter, Security and Emergency Procedures

5.1 Specialist environments must ensure that:

- Perimeter boundaries to play areas and buildings are secure and appropriate to the needs of current users.
- Evacuation and, where appropriate, invacuation procedures are in place, accessible, and practiced regularly.
- Emergency arrangements reflect the physical, sensory and medical needs of pupils accessing the provision.

6. Internal Alternative Provision – Assurance Parity

6.1 Internal alternative provision operated by Trust schools must meet the same standards of accessibility, safety and reasonable adjustment as DSPs and special schools. These settings will be incorporated into Trust-wide quality assurance cycles, ensuring consistent oversight of environment, equipment and risk across all specialist contexts.

7. Quality Assurance and Review

7.1 Compliance with the standards set out in this appendix will form part of Trust-wide specialist provision reviews. Findings will be reported through established governance, safeguarding and health and safety routes and will inform the prioritisation of any required remedial actions.