**A guide to Making Reasonable ADJUSTMENTS for schools**

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**1. Introduction**

This document is guidance for schools on making reasonable adjustments, to all aspects of school life, including policies, practices and procedures, so that pupils who are disabled are not placed at substantial disadvantage. It is unlawful for schools to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason relating to their disability. Schools must take reasonable steps to ensure that a disabled child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage to those pupils who are not disabled. This document offers guidance and provides links to further information on what type of changes would usually be expected.

**2. The Equality ACt 2010**

**2.1 Background**

In England and Wales the Equality Act applies to all schools. The disability provisions replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:

* Unlike the DDA the Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must demonstrate that they cannot carry out, thus making the definition of disability less restrictive for disabled people to meet.
* Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified.
* Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be defended as justified – bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally.
* Schools have a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through Special Educational Needs (SEN) Education, Health and Care plans or from other sources.

For schools the duty is summarised as below:

* Where a school does place a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
* Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled pupils.
* Schools are not required to make major adjustments unless the school are undertaking new build projects or major refurbishments projects.

**2.2 Auxiliary Aids**

There is a duty to provide auxiliary aids as part of the reasonable adjustment for all schools. Many disabled children may need auxiliary aids which are necessary as part of their SEN provision. These aids may be provided in the school under the new SEN Education, Health and Care plans route, in which case there will be no need for the school to provide those aids as part of your reasonable adjustment duty. Schools will have to consider whether to provide auxiliary aids as a reasonable adjustment for disabled children who do not have an SEN Education, Health and Care plans, or where the Education, Health and Care plan does not provide the auxiliary aid or service. There should be no assumption, however, that if an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN regime then it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment.

Similarly, there should be no assumption on grounds of costs, that it is unreasonable for a school to provide an auxiliary aid. All decisions would depend on the facts of each individual case.

**2.3 SCHOOLS duties around accessibility for disabled pupils**

Schools need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils, in line with the Equalities Act 2010. These accessibility plans would consist of the following information:

* increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
* improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
* Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Schools will also need to have regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must regularly review them. An accessibility plan may be a freestanding document but may also be published as part of another document such as the school development plan. OFSTED inspections may include a school’s accessibility plan as part of their review.

**2.4 examples of reasonable adjustments**

Below is a list of some of the physical features and changes which schools would be expected to consider as a reasonable adjustment. This is not an exhaustive list and is provided as a general indicative guide as to what would be reasonable.

* Steps and stairs - making alterations or installing handrails, nosing's and contrasting edge markings etc., including stair-lifts.
* Passageways and paths - maintaining pot holes and flat surfaces for wheelchair users, and hand rails where necessary.
* Entrances and exits – Disabled friendly entrances with wide doors and lowered reception desks. Schools should also consider their exit doors to be directly onto a pathway which is flat without a step for ease of access particularly for fire exits.
* Internal and external doors - installing automatic doors, new door ironmongery (handles, closers, hold backs etc.), changes to door widths and leaves, changes to glazing panels where necessary and making doorways wider.
* Toilets and sinks - lever or push taps/flushing mechanisms, hand rails, height adjustments and centralised toilets for assistance either side.
* Signs - changes for visual impaired children including font sign and background colour of sign for classroom numbers on doors. This may include more lighting for clearer signs to be more visible.
* Filming of windows/blinds – to reduce glare for pupils with visual impairments.
* Redecoration – to provide contrasting colour schemes around doors/floors and walls for VI pupils.
* Yellow Line markings for hazards and level changes on school grounds, specifically on steps.
* Hygiene Rooms - Changing beds, hoists, wash down facility and specialist toilet seats installed.
* Soundfield systems, radio aids and hearing induction loops

Alternatively, if a number of the above physical changes are required, schools will need to consider if it is more appropriate and practical to make timetabling adjustments and/or changes to the location of class bases so all classes are accessible. For example, relocating one or more classes to the ground floor for a wheelchair user if the provision of a lift to a first floor area is not possible or appropriate.

Please note schools would be expected to use their Devolved Formula Capital and/or revenue funding to make such adjustments and provide specialist equipment. All mainstream schools are provided with ‘notional’ SEN funding. The funding is channelled through additional needs factors contained within the funding formula. This notional funding amounts to around £20 million across Derby's mainstream schools. Where adaptations are required for pupils with special educational needs, schools are asked to allocate this funding for the works required.

Below is a list of some of the school management issues which can be easily adapted. This would be expected as a reasonable adjustment:

* Type Size -The size and type is fundamental to legibility. Try to use between 12 and 14 point on printed material and 24 point on PowerPoints. The larger the type the more people can read the document.
* Contrast -The better the contrast between the background and the text, the more legible the text will be. Black text on white paper generally provides the best contrast for people with visual impairments, although pastel coloured paper or coloured overlays are often recommended for people with dyslexia. On screen (e.g. webpages, PowerPoints etc.) white text on a dark background is best. Different people will have their own preferences so it is important when producing something for a specific individual to ask what they find best. When writing on a whiteboard or flipchart it is best to avoid green and red pens as these are the hardest to read if someone is colour blind or has a visual impairment.
* Typeface -Avoid highly stylised typefaces, such as those with ornamental or decorative features.
* Type style -Avoid blocks of CAPITAL LETTERS or *italics*. Both are problematic not only for those with sight difficulties but also those with emerging literacy skills.
* Spacing -For someone with a visual impairment you may need to switch to double spacing. In addition, always start and finish a sentence on the same page and do not break up words with a hyphen at the end of a line.
* Alignment - Always align text to the left margin; this makes it easier for people to find the start of a line. People using magnification devices may only be able to see two letters at a time, so the more consistent the layout the better. Justified and centred text with uneven word spacing, as well as writing in newspaper style columns can be difficult for a number of readers. It’s still ok to centre headings to help mark out the text.
* Forms - Allow extra space for forms. These benefits a number of different people, e.g. partially sighted people tend to have larger handwriting.
* Printing - Avoid glossy paper or glossy laminates as glare makes it difficult to read.
* Avoid leaflets such as the A4 style folded into three, as it can be difficult for a number of people to track what order to read things in. Always number pages and consider using A3 where possible.
* Language - Use clear and simple language, avoiding jargon and acronyms.
* Key Information - Use bullet points or text boxes to make key points clear. Put key facts at the beginning, e.g. what, where, when, why. Use numbers and not the word for a number, e.g. “3” not “three”.
* Alternative formats - Important information may need to be transferred to an audio tape or DVD, but keep tapes short. Alternatively provide a “screen reader” software option for electronic versions. If emailing, remember formatting may be lost, making reading more difficult. It may be preferable to send a brief email with an attachment containing the bulk of the information.
* Use of visual images -Where possible use images, photos or drawings to support text.

**3. further information**

**Further Information**

Schools can use the following links to access further information:

Early Years guidance: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/disabled-children-and-equality-act-2010-early-years>

Schools guidance:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/disabled-children-and-equality-act-2010-schools>

Equality Human Rights:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/reasonable_adjustments_for_disabled_pupils_1.pdf>

Equality Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-guidance>

*All Schools should also have the following documents:*

Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early year's settings:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/dfes%200160%202006](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https%3A//www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/dfes%200160%202006)

Promoting Disability Equality in Schools:

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/promoting-disability-equality-in-schools-6027827>

Equality Act 2010: advice for schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

Further guidance is also available on the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/) website.