



The Italia Conti Academy Theatre Arts School

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2015 - 2018

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act – DDA, as amended by the SEND and Disability Act 2001 and Equality Act 2010, requires all schools, academies and LAs to plan to increase, over time, accessibility for disabled students. Independent Schools are required to produce plans for their individual establishment.

The Italia Conti Academy is required to plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled students to the curriculum
- Improving access to the Academy's physical environment (buildings)
- Improving written information for disabled students

At a legislative level there are three main strands for disabled students:

1. The SEND Framework (the Education Act 1996 and the SEND and Disability Act 2001)
2. The Disability Discrimination Duties (Sections 28A-28C of the DDA 1995)
3. The planning duties (Section 28D-28E of the DDA 1995) The Education Act 1996 states that 'children have a special educational need if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them'.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- a) Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.
- b) Have a disability which prevents, or hinders, them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LA.
- c) Are under compulsory school age and fall within the above definitions, or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

Objectives

The purpose of the School's programme

The Italia Conti Academy endorses the Accessibility Strategies published by the Borough of Islington. In its policy document, the Local Authority states its current position and also its aim to increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the Academy curriculum.

Central to this policy is the acknowledgement that many existing schools have physical characteristics that make access for disabled pupils difficult and this makes total compliance by all schools and academies impractical. The Academy has developed specialist provisions with experienced staff, where possible, to meet the needs of students with physical disabilities.

The design of the Academy building is fully compliant with current DDA regulations and exceeds the minimum requirement in relation to toilet and changing facilities. The following plan outlines various measures the Academy is taking to improve access for all students. The plan should be read in conjunction with the Borough of Islington document, "Putting Fairness into Practice".

1.2 Involvement of disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the school

For students with an Educational, Health Care Plan or SEND or those on School Action Plus of the SEND Register, the views and aspirations of disabled students are formally gathered annually through the annual review process. This seeks to establish what is going well and also any concerns or barriers to progress from the student's point of view.

Their parents also have the opportunity to express their views either in writing or simply verbally at the review meeting. This includes the opportunity to express any concerns or queries they may have regarding their child's progress and the provision in place for them.

Areas for development:

- Questionnaire / audit issued to appropriate parents and analysis of results.
- Amendments of the Disability Equality Scheme and Access Plan as a result of information gathered.

1.3 Information gathering

Within the current academy population of 73 students, there are currently 3 students with a Statement of Special Educational Need, 15 students on School Action Plus and School Action on the SEND Register.

Disabled students currently in the academy have the following needs:

- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD - including Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Development Disorder) *not formally diagnosed*
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Behavioural, Emotional, (and Social) Difficulties (BESD)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Visual Impairment (VI) *not significant*
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD – including Dyslexia and Dyspraxia)

Students falling within the definition of disabled will have a wide range of needs and requirements including: mobility impairment, SENDsory impairment, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, asthma and progressive/degenerative conditions. The Academy must not automatically consider students with a disability to have special educational needs, as can be seen below. The DDA definition states that 'a person has a disability 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 carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Definition of disability

The Equality Act duties above are applied to all students who are defined by the Equality Act 2010 as being disabled and under the planning duties, the Academy has a general duty to improve the accessibility of schools for disabled students.

- The Equality Act defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (see definition below of normal day-to-day activities).
- Physical or mental impairment includes SENDsory impairments and also hidden impairments.
- In the Equality Act 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. 'Long-term' means has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months. The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning difficulties, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, where the effect of the impairment on the student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is adverse, substantial and long-term. All those with cancer or surviving cancer; HIV or Multiple Sclerosis are now included from the point of diagnosis.

Normal day-to-day activity

The test of whether the impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects the student in everyday life in one or more of the following ways:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

The SEND Framework is designed to meet the special educational needs of individual children, some of whom may be disabled, who need provision that is additional to, or different from, what is normally available in schools.

From September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools, academies or LAs to discriminate against disabled students in their admissions and exclusions policies, education and associated services.

There are three main duties:

- Not to treat disabled students less favourably
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage
- To prepare accessibility plans for increasing, over time, the accessibility of schools for disabled students.

1.4 Impact

Assessment For the purpose of the DDA 1995

Italia Conti is required to consider the needs of students in relation to physical adaptations, curriculum access and auxiliary aids and services. These areas also fall within the scope of the SEND framework. Please note that these duties are all 'anticipatory'; Italia Conti needs to consider the requirements of current and future disabled students. This means that the Academy is expected to make reasonable enquiries to find out whether children currently on roll, as well as those seeking admission, have a disability.

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the Academy. In deciding whether a step is reasonable, the Academy may take into account the need to maintain:

1. Academic standards
2. Available resources
3. The practicalities of making a particular adjustment
4. The health and safety of the disabled students and others and the interests of others.

It is the view of both the Department for Education and the Disability Rights Commission that, where schools have already developed inclusive cultures and practices, these legal duties should mean little extra work. The Academy embraces the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act and the requirement to implement a Disability Equality Scheme. The Academy does all that is reasonably practicable to meet the needs of the disabled students, staff or visitors.

The Head Teacher and Learning Support Specialist works closely with the relevant advisory bodies in order to provide the most appropriate support to students with disabilities. This process invariably involves working closely with the student and the student's family. Every effort is made to integrate disabled persons into the mainstream activities of the Academy.

The Academy continually monitors the effectiveness of strategies put in place to accommodate persons with disabilities and instigates appropriate action to ensure appropriate physical accommodations are made and that, where necessary procedural and timetabling changes are made.

2. Identifying the main priorities for the deciding actions

The accessibility plan is required for:

- Increasing access for disabled students to the curriculum
- Improving access to the Academy's physical environment
- Improving written information for disabled students

The following plan outlines the Academy's policies in relation to Access and Disability.

3. Making it Happen

- Clear allocation of lead responsibility
- Clear allocation of resources
- An indication of expected outcomes for performance criteria
- Clear timescales
- A specified date to process for review

Short Term: Reference to accessibility has been included in school overview since 2015. Improvement in information provided to prospective parents in relation to the Academy's disability and access policies.

Medium Term: Continual monitoring of the needs of students to ensure future refurbishment work benefits students with physical disabilities. If needs are identified, seek advice from Learning and Safeguarding Leads on appropriate design features. Identified needs are identified and addressed whenever they might arise.

On-going. Commitment to providing reasonable adjustment to the Academy environment to meet the needs of any disabled person. Review all Academy policies. Improved awareness of the desirability that the Academy does not discriminate the needs of disabled students, staff or visitors. Fully compliant buildings.

Ensure installation of window blinds or curtains in all classrooms with data projection facilities to benefit all students and particularly those with impaired vision. Incorporate the provision of blinds or curtains in the standard fit-out of all classrooms and laboratories. Students will experience improved visibility when viewing whiteboards and projection screens.

Longer Term The Academy will continue to incorporate current accessibility levels in all areas of the building and refurbishment works. Our policy ensures optimum standards where this will better suit the needs of our students, staff and visitors to the Academy. All stakeholders will benefit from the fully inclusive nature of the Academy building.

COMMITMENT TO REVIEW

This Policy will be monitored and reviewed every three years by the relevant Policy Owner named below and evaluated and approved by the Quality Assurance Body on a three year cycle, and/or in the light of changes in National Curriculum requirements and DfE guidance/regulations.

LINKS

Admissions Policy

Equality Policy

SEND policy

Equality Act 2010

Named Responsibility of Policy: Mrs K Dwyer-Burchill – Head Teacher

Date of Policy: November 2015

Date of next Review: November 2018

Governor Lead: Mr Vote