



**Rye Hills
Academy**

Accessibility Policy

Review date: September 2025
Date of next review: September 2028



**North East
Learning Trust**

Review history

Review Date	Reviewer	Approved by	Date approved	Implementation
September 2021	J Bissicks	Interim Academy Board		1 September 2021
September 2025	Head of School	Executive Headteacher	September 2025	September 2025

Recent revisions

Issue No.	Date	Revisions made
2	September 2025	Policy updated and restructured. Actions updated following accessibility audit.

1. Mission Statement

You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

Rye Hills Academy is part of the North East Learning Trust and both are aware of the general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In addition, all schools are required under the Equalities 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.

We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents, and visitors regardless of their age, education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional, and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance, and inclusion. The plan covers the period from: September 2025 to September 2028.

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. 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.

At Rye Hills Academy, we are committed to developing a culture of inclusion, support, and awareness within the school. We work to eliminate all forms of discrimination. This accessibility plan contains relevant actions to ensure access is provided for disabled pupils, staff and visitors in addition to anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable.

2. Aims

The Accessibility Plan contains relevant actions to:

- Improve awareness of Equality and inclusion
- Improve access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities or equipment as necessary.
- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, in addition to altering the curriculum as necessary and practicable, to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life (as stated in the duty of the school under the Equalities Act 2010).
- Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents/carers, and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and any events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.
- Work with appropriate organisations to ensure accessibility is appropriate for all students, staff, and visitors.

3. Links with other Policies

This Accessibility Plan is not a standalone document and should be read in conjunction with other school policies and documents and strategies.

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

- Health and safety policy
- Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication
- Special educational needs (SEN) policy and information report
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Behaviour policy
- Complaints procedure

4. Current Good Practice

As part of transition procedures, we aim to clarify disability or health conditions in early communications with parents/carers, previous educational establishments, and where possible pupils. Data is constantly reviewed with parents/carers of pupils on roll to ensure alterations are accurate and needs are addressed.

All pupils are given the opportunity to participate in a range of in-class and extracurricular activities where appropriate. Adjustments are made to allow participation wherever possible. Access to all areas of the school is good as most areas have wheelchair access; disabled pupils have the use of lifts and accessible toilets are available.

Curriculum reasonable adjustments are made to allow access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability. For example, additional practical aids including access to IT, alterations in delivery and access to assessment aids.

5. Information

As most information is directed home via pupils and e-mails, it may be necessary that different forms of communication are made available to enable all SEND pupils and their parents/carers access the information in a format appropriate to them. This will be discussed with all parties involved.

6. Access audit

Rye Hills Academy is a two storey building which was built in 2016. The approach, car parking and entrance were also designed and constructed in 2016 and include tactile paving, flat entrances, and accessible doors. In the car park there are three disabled parking bays and five further parking bays at the side of the building. Across the site

there are 9 accessible W.C.s. All accessible toilets are fitted with a handrail and a pull emergency cord.

All users can access the whole building as there is a lift that provides access to the first floor of the building.

Throughout the site there is emergency exit signage and accessible W.C. signage. There are three EVAC chairs located at the top of stairways where the first floor can be accessed via the lift. There are PEEPs in place for all staff and students that require them.

Doorways in the new part of the building meet accessibility regulations.

7. Action Plan September 2025 – September 2028

Increase access to the physical environment

Aim	Actions	Timescales	Desired Outcome
Any pupil with a disability will have access to the full school environment	Over time, ensure that any adjustments made to the school environment are compliant with equalities and legislation and improve building accessibility	Complete	Any repairs or improvements to the building support the aim of full accessibility for disabled pupils, staff and visitors
Visitors to the school will have access to accessible parking and clearly signed directions to an easily accessible, staffed reception area	Over time, ensure that any adjustments made to the school environment are compliant with equalities and legislation and improve building accessibility	Complete	Any repairs or improvements to the building support the aim of full accessibility for disabled pupils, staff and visitors
In the event of any building works, all corridors and emergency evacuation routes will be obstacle-free	Maintain clear corridors and emergency evacuation routes	Ongoing	All corridors and evacuation routes be fully accessible to all pupils, staff and visitors at all times.
Any pupil with a disability to have full access to ramps, lifts and automatic doors allowing freedom of movement around the site	Install and maintain ramps, lifts, handrails and automatic doors where required an in line with ongoing building repairs and maintenance	Complete	Any improvements or replacements requirements are made in line with the aim of the accessibility policy
When considering refurbishments to the building, provide an increased number of accessible toilets and	Review accessibility signage and locations and replace with tactile signage as appropriate	Ongoing	The building will become increasingly accessible over time.

hygiene facilities throughout the school and when making replacements, do so in consideration of this policy	Ensure DDA dining spaces are in place via ongoing refurbishment plans Clearly visible stair level signage for students, staff and visitors with sight impairments when replaced.		
Ensure seating in waiting areas is designed for ease of use	When replacing furniture, ensure ease of use has been considered	Complete	Furniture in waiting areas will be easy to use for disabled stakeholders
If needs arise, seating in corridor areas will be installed and accessible if required by pupils, staff or visitors.	Seating will only be available in corridors that are wide enough to maintain safe and unobstructed passageways.	Ongoing	Seating provided to pupils, staff and visitors who require rest breaks when moving around the site.

Increase access to the curriculum

Aim	Actions	Timescales	Desired Outcome
The curriculum will be fully accessible to disabled pupils	Seek advice from specialist advisory teachers; CPD for all staff Access to additional practical aids and access to alternative assessment arrangements to be in place as appropriate	Ongoing dependent on need	The curriculum and its assessment will be fully accessible to disabled pupils
Wherever possible, classrooms will be fully accessible for any pupil with a disability	Arrange furniture and classroom layouts to allow wheelchair access as required.	Ongoing dependent on need	Wherever possible, classrooms will be easily accessed by pupils with a disability. Any

enabling access to all curriculum aspects			changes to fixed furniture to support the accessibility policy.
Classrooms, wherever possible, to have desks and seating that are fully accessible for any pupil with a disability as required	Ensure accessible furniture is available if required.	Ongoing dependent on need.	Where possible, pupils will have full use of accessible desks and seating.
Learning materials to be fully accessible to all pupils.	Provide access to educational aids to maximise learning opportunities as required.	Ongoing dependent on need.	All pupils will be fully supported to enable them to fully access the curriculum.

Improve the provision of information

Aim	Actions	Timescales	Desired Outcome
To increase accessibility of information shared with stakeholders	Evaluate how accessible information is to parents/carers and pupils and use the findings to make necessary adjustments	Ongoing	Information shared becomes more accessible for all
To ensure staff are fully trained in effective communication techniques	Provide staff with training so they are clear in communication strategies and awareness of accessible formats.	Complete	Effective communication between school and disabled stakeholders.
Action feedback from students, pupils and staff to improve information accessibility.	Review methods to ensure lines of communication are open between school and stakeholders.	Ongoing	To continually improve communication to ensure all accessibility needs are met

The action plan for physical accessibility relates to the access audit of the school, which is undertaken regularly by the Trust.