



# HEARTWOOD

## LEARNING TRUST

### **ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN**

### **Aspire Academy**

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL HEARTWOOD LEARNING TRUST SCHOOLS/ACADEMIES

Document Management	
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<b>Approved By</b>	Chief Operating Officer

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## Policy Updates

Date	Page	Policy Updates
July 2021	Whole policy	New policy
October 2023	Whole policy	Updated inline with current Scheme of Delegation and re-formatted inline with other Trust Policies
April 2024	3	Statement of Intent added inline with other Trust Policies
May 2024	8	7.5 - Responsibility for providing support such as auxiliary aids clarified
May 2024	8	7.6 - Frequency of access audits clarified
May 2024	9	9.4 - Clarification of support in place for pupils with SEND
May 2024	9	9.5 - Section added regarding support available for visually impaired pupils
May 2024	11	New Trust-wide Accessibility Plan template added

## Statement of Intent

Heartwood Learning Trust is an inclusive and collaborative Church of England multi-academy trust serving church, community and alternative provision schools. This policy is guided by our Christian ethos and the visions of our Trust and its schools/academies. We share a clear vision – to create schools where children and young people thrive, as we help them prepare to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

For us, a place to thrive means much more than a place simply to be comfortable. Instead, our aim is to develop schools and an educational offer which enable each pupil to flourish academically, practically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

Heartwood Learning Trust (HLT) is active in promoting an inclusive, positive environment by ensuring that every pupil is given equal opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy school life. Heartwood Learning Trust continually looks for ways to improve accessibility within the school/academy through data collection, management meetings and discussions.

Heartwood Learning Trust is committed to taking all reasonable steps to avoid placing anyone at substantial disadvantage and works closely with pupils with disabilities, their families and any relevant outside agencies in order to remove any potential barriers to their learning experience. The ways in which the Trust fosters inclusion and equality for pupils and staff who share other protected characteristics are outlined in the Equality Policy and Objectives.

This policy outlines the principles that the Trust is committed to following throughout all accessibility planning activities to ensure that all disabled pupils are able to enjoy and access all aspects of educational life in the same way as their peers.

## 1. Aims

- 1.1. Schools/academies are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have an Accessibility Plan ([Appendix A](#)). The purpose of this policy is to:
  - Ensure that all pupils can participate in the curriculum
  - Ensure all schools/academies provide a positive physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
  - Ensure the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils
- 1.2. The Accessibility Plan ([Appendix A](#)) is structured to complement and support the school/academy's plans and equality objectives. We are committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access and values all pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school/academy.
- 1.3. The Accessibility Plan will contain relevant and timely actions to:
  - Ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are their peers; this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school/academy, such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or educational visits; it also covers provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.
  - Provide suitable access to the physical environment of the school/academy, adding specialist facilities as necessary; this covers improvements to the physical environment and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe.
  - Ensure suitable delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors with disabilities, examples can include worksheets/handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school/academy and school events; the information should be made available in preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.
- 1.4. The Accessibility Plan relates to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written information.
- 1.5. Whole school/academy training will recognise the need to continue to raise the awareness of staff and local Governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

## 2. Legal Framework

- 2.1. This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:
  - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
  - Education and Inspections Act 2006
  - Equality Act 2010
  - The Education Act 1996
  - The Children and Families Act 2014
  - The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
  - DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools'

- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'

2.2. The Accessibility Policy and Plan should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Admissions Policies
- Health and Safety Policy & Procedures Manual
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Administering Medication Policy
- Equality Policy and Objectives

2.3. The school/academy supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the Accessibility plan. The Trust's Complaints Policy and Procedure covers the Accessibility Plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in any school/academy, the Complaints Policy and Procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

### 3. Legislation and Guidance

3.1. This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools/academies on the Equality Act 2010.

3.2. 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.

3.3. This policy complies with the funding agreement and Articles of Association.

3.4. Schools/academies 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.

3.5. Schools/academies have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities. The DfE's guidance on the Equality Act summarises the duty as:

- Where something a school/academy does places a pupil with disabilities at a disadvantage compared to other pupils, the school/academy must take reasonable steps to try to avoid that disadvantage.
- Schools/academies 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 with non-disabled pupils.

3.6. Schools/academies are not under a reasonable adjustment duty to make alterations to physical features, as this is already considered as part of their pre-existing planning duties.

3.7. Factors that schools/academies will need to take into account when deciding what adjustments are reasonable for a school/academy to make. For example, they should consider:

- The availability of resources including financial or other assistance

- The extent to which taking any particular step would be effective in overcoming the substantial disadvantage experienced by a disabled pupil
- The effect of the disability on the individual
- Health and safety requirements
- The interests of other pupils and prospective pupils

3.8. The school/academy will document all interventions, support and reasonable adjustments, in place for pupils. This information will be recorded on the accessibility plan, as well as individual pupils' records.

## 4. Inclusion and Equality Statement

- 4.1. The Trust aims to treat all pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind.
- 4.2. All schools/academies are inclusive. We aim to make all children feel included in all activities and lessons. We work to make all our teaching fully inclusive to ensure that all children can successfully access the curriculum. We recognise that all children are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. We have systems in place for early identification of barriers to their learning and participation so that they can engage in school activities. We acknowledge and recognise the need for high expectations and appropriate targets for all children. We actively encourage equality and equity through all our work.
- 4.3. The Trust is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.
- 4.4. In line with the Equality Act 2010, each school/academy within the Trust does not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership.
- 4.5. The Accessibility Plan will detail any barriers which are hindering the opportunities for pupils with SEND. The aim of the plan is to take appropriate measures in order to overcome these barriers, allowing all pupils equal opportunities.
- 4.6. Staff members will be aware of any pupils who are at a substantial disadvantage and will take the appropriate steps to ensure the pupil is effectively supported. Wherever possible, teaching staff will adapt their lesson plans and the curriculum to allow all pupils to reach their full potential and receive the support they need. The school/academy will ensure that all extracurricular activities are accessible to all pupils and make reasonable adjustments to allow pupils with SEND to participate in all school activities.

## 5. Definitions

- 5.1. The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities.
- 5.2. In line with the Equality Act 2010, 'indirect discrimination' is defined as where a provision, criterion or practice is discriminatory in relation to a person's protected characteristics, where:
- The provision, criterion or practice applies, or would apply, to people without those protected characteristics.

- It puts, or would put, people with those protected characteristics at a disadvantage compared to those without.
- The school/academy cannot show that the provision, criterion or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1. The **Chief Operating Officer (COO)** will be responsible for:
  - Approving the school/academy's Accessibility Plan before it is implemented.
- 6.2. The **Local Governing Committee (LGC)** will be responsible for:
  - Oversight of the implementation of the school/academy's Accessibility Plan.
- 6.3. The **Trust Operations Manager (TOM)** is responsible for:
  - Making recommendations and providing advice to the Headteacher/Principal in the creation of their school/academy's Accessibility Plan.
- 6.4. The Trust's **Director of SEND** is responsible for:
  - The creation of the Trust's Accessibility Plan template to assist schools/academies with essential and statutory accessibility requirements inline with the SEN Information Report.
  - Liaising with the SENDCo, Headteacher/Principal and TOM during the adaptation/localisation and implementation of the school/academy's Accessibility Plan.
- 6.5. The Principal/Headteacher will be responsible for:
  - Ensuring that all accessibility planning, including the school/academy's Accessibility Plan, adheres to and reflects the principles outlined in this policy.
  - Creating an Accessibility Plan with the intention of improving the school/academy's accessibility, in conjunction with the Trust Operations Manager who will act in an advisory capacity.
  - Ensuring that staff members are aware of pupil's disabilities and medical conditions where necessary.
  - Establishing whether a new pupil has any disabilities or medical conditions which the school/academy should be aware of.
  - Consulting with relevant and reputable experts if challenging situations regarding pupils with disabilities arise.
  - Working closely with the Trust Operations Manager, Local Authority and external agencies to effectively create and implement the school/academy's Accessibility Plan.
- 6.6. The SENCo will be responsible for:
  - Working closely with the Principal/Headteacher to ensure that pupils with SEND are appropriately supported.
  - Ensuring they have oversight of the needs of pupils with SEND attending the school/academy, and advising the Headteacher/Principal in relation to those needs, as appropriate.
- 6.7. Staff members will be responsible for:
  - Acting in accordance with this policy and the Accessibility Plan at all times.
  - Ensuring that their actions do not discriminate against any pupil, parent/carer or colleague.

- Supporting disabled pupils to access their environment and their education wherever necessary, e.g. by making reasonable adjustments to their practice.

6.8. All staff members and Governors will partake in whole-school training on equality issues related to the Equality Act 2010. Designated staff members will be trained to effectively support pupils with medical conditions, further information can be found within the Trust's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Administering Medication Policy.

## **7. Accessibility Plan**

7.1. Each school/academy's Accessibility Plan demonstrates how access will be improved for pupils with disabilities, staff, parents/carers and visitors to the school/academy within a given timeframe. It will be presented as either a freestanding document or as part of another document, such as the School Improvement and Development Plan. The Accessibility Plan will be structured to complement and support the Trust's Equality Policy and Objectives, as well as the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy.

7.2. The plan has the following key aims:

- To increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum.
- To improve and maintain the school/academy's physical environment to enable pupils with disabilities to take advantage of the facilities and education on offer.
- To improve the availability and delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors with disabilities.

7.3. The Accessibility Plan is intended to provide a three-year projection. If it is not feasible to undertake all the plans/works during the lifespan of the Accessibility Plan, some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The school/academy will provide adequate resources for implementing plans, ensuring pupils are sufficiently supported.

7.4. The Accessibility Plan will be used to measure the necessity of making reasonable adjustments in order to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities where practicable. It will be used to advise other school/academy planning documents and will be reported upon annually in respect of progress and outcomes.

7.5. The school/academy will collaborate with the Trust and the Local Authority (LA), as necessary, in order to effectively develop and implement the plan. The LA will prepare accessibility strategies based on the same principles as the school/academy's Accessibility Plan. The school/academy will provide suitable support, such as auxiliary aids and services where necessary to support pupils with disabilities.

7.6. An access audit will be undertaken on an annual basis, or more frequently where required. During Ofsted inspections, the inspectorate may include the school/academy's Accessibility Plan as part of their review. Both this policy and the Accessibility Plan will be published on the school/academy's website.

## **8. Admissions**

8.1. Each school/academy within the Trust will act in accordance with their Admissions Policy. The same entry criteria will be applied to all pupils and potential pupils.

- 8.2. Each school/academy within the Trust will strive to not put any pupil at a substantial disadvantage by making reasonable adjustments prior to the pupil starting at the school/academy. All pupils, including those with SEND, will have appropriate access to all opportunities available to any member of the school/academy community.
- 8.3. Information will be obtained on future pupils in order to facilitate advanced planning. Prospective parents/carers of pupils with an EHCP, and pupils with SEND, are invited to a transition meeting prior to the pupil starting at the school/academy in order to discuss the pupil's specific needs.

## **9. Curriculum**

- 9.1. The Trust is committed to providing a healthy environment that enables full curriculum access and values and includes all pupils regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual and emotional needs. No pupil is excluded from any aspect of the school/academy curriculum due to their disabilities or impairments. Each school/academy within the Trust aims to provide a differentiated curriculum to enable all pupils to feel secure and make progress.
- 9.2. The SENCo will work together with the relevant curriculum staff to adapt a pupil's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or Risk Assessment/Medical Plan/Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan with advice sought from outside agencies, where appropriate, to allow all pupils to reach their full potential.
- 9.3. Where areas of the curriculum present challenges for a pupil, these are dealt with on an individual basis. The class teacher, in discussion with the pupil and their parents/carers, will ensure that all adjustments possible, in line with common sense and practical application, will be made for any disability or impairment. Physical education lessons will be adapted, wherever possible, to allow pupils with disabilities to participate in lessons.
- 9.4. There are established procedures for the identification and support of pupils with SEND in place at the school/academy. Detailed information on pupils with SEND will be given to relevant staff in order to aid teaching, e.g. 'pupil passports' or 'IEPs/Learning Plans'.
- 9.5. Specialist resources are available for pupils with visual impairments, such as large print reading books. Learning support assistants are deployed to support pupils both in the classroom and to deliver targeted interventions so that they can access their learning.

## **10. Physical Environment**

- 10.1. Each school/academy within the Trust is committed to ensuring that all pupils, staff members, parents/carers and visitors have equal access to areas and facilities within the school/academy premises.
- 10.2. The school/academy has toilet facilities suitable for people with disabilities which are fitted with a handrail and an emergency pull cord.
- 10.3. Where entrances to the school/academy are not flat, a ramp is supplied for access. Wide doors are fitted throughout the school/academy to allow for wheelchair access. The corridor flooring and lighting is designed to support those who are visually impaired.
- 10.4. The school/academy will make its best endeavours to anticipate potential access needs that may be encountered in the future and to ensure that the physical environment is as accessible as possible for all

current and prospective pupils. Further information can be found within the school/academy's Accessibility Plan.

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

- 11.1. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or more frequently in the event that new legislation or guidance concerning equality and disability is published.
- 11.2. This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Operations Manager and approved by the Chief Operating Officer. The Principal/Headteacher is responsible for updating the school/academy's Accessibility Plan in collaboration with the SENDCo, with advice from the Trust's Operations Manager.
- 11.3. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken as and when school/academy plans are reviewed.

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

Access to Curriculum					
Priority	Target	Strategy	Expected Outcome	Timescale	Responsibility
Short - Medium Term	Reflect identified areas of need in lesson planning and delivery	Incorporate high quality teaching and adaptive teaching practices into all planning.	Improved access to the curriculum for all students	Ongoing	Principal SLT i/c T&L Curriculum Leaders SENDCo All teaching staff
Short - Medium Term	Embed the use of pupil passports and learning plans within all lessons.	SENDCo to offer information via Provision Map and to guide and support teaching staff to set relevant SMART targets.	Improved access to the curriculum for all students, as teacher knowledge of SEN needs and strategies will have been communicated.	Ongoing	Principal SLT i/c of T&L SENDCo All teaching staff
Short - Medium term	Improve accessibility to the curriculum via a bespoke approach to the school.	Research evidence based interventions across all four broad areas of need, that will enable all children to access the curriculum.  Implementation of life skills as a core part of the curriculum offered to support KS3 students.	All students have access to all aspects of the curriculum and are able to excel.  Identified students are able to receive the necessary support to enable them to close the gap and access the curriculum.	Ongoing	Principal SLT i/c T&L Curriculum Leaders SENDCo

Short - Medium term	Staff to understand the importance of reasonable adjustments and how to put these ideals into practice in curriculum, ethos and approach.	Staff to read access arrangements within the SEN passports.  Staff to complete an online training session on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.	Staff will use reasonable adjustments information into consideration in all their planning.	Ongoing	Principal Curriculum Leaders SENDCo All teaching staff
Medium - Long term	Ensure access to computer technology within all curriculum areas is appropriate for students with disabilities.	ICT plan includes prioritised list for developing computer technology as required for students with disabilities.	Access to appropriate computer technology will be improved for all disabled students.	As required unless the needs of SEND students require immediate action.	Principal Service Support Manager ICT Manager SENDCo

<b>Access to Information</b>					
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Short - Medium Term	Produce all resources for pupils in the correct size font and appropriate colour background to assist visually impaired pupils.  Ensure all whiteboards have a matt coloured background.	Ensure staff have access to training and can provide appropriate resources to support the needs of visually impaired pupils.  Use of specialist services to support the adaptations for those who are VI.	Communication methods for pupils in school are inclusive and are able to support pupils' additional needs.  Pupils who are VI will be able to access the curriculum.	Ongoing for all pupils with visual impairments	Principal SENDCO Service Support Manager Class Teachers Specialist services

Short - Medium Term	Improve the delivery of information through the use of visuals alongside written text as much as possible, in order to support the needs of pupils with SEND, low levels of literacy or EAL.	Staff will receive suitable training to support the use of Dual Coding within their teaching.	Pupils vocabulary development and content understanding will be supported via adapted learning opportunities.	Ongoing	Principal SLT i/c of T&L Curriculum Leaders SENDCO Class Teachers
Short - Medium Term	Review all information to parents/carers including all school websites, to ensure information is accessible to all neurodivergent and EAL stakeholders	Provide information in accessible language. School office staff / Pastoral Leaders will support parents to access information and complete Google Forms where necessary.	Communication methods for parents are accessible, thus improving their understanding of school communication.	Ongoing	Principal SENDCO Pastoral Leads ICT staff

<b>Site Access</b>					
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Short Term - Medium Term	Ensuring all students who require a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) have one written in a timely manner.	<p>All students are shown regularly on how to safely evacuate the building.</p> <p>Less mobile students and staff are aware of evacuation procedures that may differ from the norm.</p> <p>Students have allocated support staff at key times in order to safely evacuate a building in the case of an emergency.</p>	All students and staff are aware of any evacuation procedures that differ from the norm.	Ongoing	Principal Service Support Manager All staff
Short Term - Medium Term	Increase visibility of all steps both inside and within the grounds of the Academy.	<p>Replace hazard tape on each step in order to increase visibility and on any columns within the facade of the building.</p> <p>Use of specialist services to support the adaptations for those who are VI.</p>	The hazard has been made more visible for those with partial eyesight, therefore making the environment safer.	Ongoing.	Principal Trust Facilities staff Site Manager.

## Record of Annual Review Plan

To be used by key staff across each school/academy with advisory comments from the Trust's Central Services Team. **Annual reviews** between key staff who oversee the Accessibility Plan will allow schools/academies to consider any amendments to the accessibility plan. Any amendments are to be raised on this form and passed via the Headteacher/Principal for consideration, who will then arrange for the amendment to be presented to the Local Governing Committee for their approval.

Area - Access to the curriculum		
<b>Annual Review Date:</b>		
<b>Personnel in attendance:</b>		
<b>Targets (numbers identified)</b>	<b>Summary of progress being made towards meeting targets</b>	<b>Summary of potential barriers hindering progress towards meeting targets</b>
Area - Access to Information		
<b>Annual Review Date:</b>		
<b>Personnel in attendance:</b>		
<b>Targets (numbers identified)</b>	<b>Summary of progress being made towards meeting targets</b>	<b>Summary of potential barriers hindering progress towards meeting targets</b>
Area - Access to Site		
<b>Annual Review Date:</b>		
<b>Personnel in attendance:</b>		
<b>Targets (numbers identified)</b>	<b>Summary of progress being made towards meeting targets</b>	<b>Summary of potential barriers hindering progress towards meeting targets</b>

## Plan Amendment Form

To be used by all staff across the Trust, for amendment, insertion/deletion as required. Any amendments are to be raised on this form and passed via the Headteacher/Principal for consideration, who will then arrange for the amendment to be presented to the Local Governing Committee for their approval.

1	<b>Copy the text for amendment into this section as per the Trust's Accessibility Policy and Plan</b>		
2	<b>Re-type the text as amended, for review, inclusion or rejection, for LGC consideration</b>		
3	<b>Reasons for amendment to be entered here in full</b>		
4	<b>Viewed by Headteacher/Principal</b>		
	<b>Comments on adaptations</b>		
	<b>Agree to amend</b>		<b>Reject amendment</b>
	<b>Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>
6	<b>Shared with the LGC for their Approval:</b>		
	<b>Headteacher/ Principal Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>
	<b>Decision to amend</b>		<b>Decision to reject amendment</b>
	<b>Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>