



MERCHANT TAYLORS'  
OXFORDSHIRE  
ACADEMY TRUST



# ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Version 1.0

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Wallingford School, St. George's Road,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8HH  
t: 01491 837115  
e: [governance@mtoat.co.uk](mailto:governance@mtoat.co.uk)  
[www.wallingfordschool.com](http://www.wallingfordschool.com)

*Wellbeing  
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## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Definition of Disability.....	3
3. Aims of the Policy and Plan .....	4
4. Responsibilities of Wallingford School (an MTOAT School) .....	5
i. General.....	5
ii. Education and related activities .....	5
iii. Physical environment.....	6
iv. Provision of information .....	6
5. Implementation and Review.....	6
i. Financial planning and control .....	6
ii. Review of policy and plan .....	7
6. Other Associated Policies and Procedures .....	7

## 1. Introduction

This policy – and the accompanying action plan – is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Equality Act 2010 in order to prevent discrimination against disabled people in their access to education.

This places key duties on schools, which are:

1. Not to discriminate against disabled students in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education benefits, facilities and services;
2. Not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
3. To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage and to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students;
4. To publish an accessibility plan for the school every three years.

The special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice (2014) states that schools must publish accessibility plans setting out how they plan to increase access for disabled students to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information.

The accessibility plan sets out the proposals of the school's governing body to increase access to education for disabled students. In line with the requirements of the Equality Act, the aim of the accessibility plan is to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum;
- Improve the physical environment of the MTOAT schools to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
- Improve the availability of accessible information to those with disabilities. This should take account of views expressed by students or parents about their preferred means of communication.

## 2. Definition of Disability

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 cannot show that the provision, criterion or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The '**protected characteristics**' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

Disability is defined within the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

'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.'

The disability provisions in the Equality Act are different from those of other protected characteristics. Rather than just treating a person with a disability equally with those without a disability, there are times when they should be treated more favourably to be able to benefit from what we offer to the same extent as a person without a disability.

We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that members of our community with a disability are fully included in our schools.

The group Disability Equality Education (DEE) recommends that all students with SEN and those with long-term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of equality legislation. This is in addition to all students with long-term impairments that have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities.

We understand that the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is different from the eligibility for special educational needs provision. This means that disabled students may or may not have special educational needs.

### 3. Aims of the Policy and Plan

#### The general duty

As laid out in our Equality Policy, in the same way that we will address the concerns of all people affected by discrimination, we make the following commitments in relation to people with disabilities:

- We will work towards eliminating discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- We will advance equality of opportunity between people who have a disability and people who do not.
- We will foster good relations between people who have a disability and people who do not.

It is the intention to consult with all stakeholders (students, parents/carers, regular visitors to the school) with disabilities to aid in the development of the plan by taking account of their views when making appropriate adjustments. This consultation process will be ongoing.

**Our accessibility plan will:**

- Reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum, and ensure full and successful participation in the school community for students and prospective students with a disability.
- Ensure that the needs of disabled staff and parents are accommodated in the school environment, as far as is reasonably practical.
- Not tolerate harassment of disabled people with any form of impairment and also consider students who are carers of disabled parents.

**4. Responsibilities of Wallingford School (an MTOAT School)****i. General**

To recognise and value parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respect the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

**ii. Education and related activities**

- To provide all students with a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students which includes:
  - Setting suitable learning challenges;
  - Responding to students' diverse learning needs;
  - Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.
- To seek the advice and guidance of external services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEN inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from local NHS trusts.
- To be particularly alert to any needs arising from requirements of newly-enrolling students to Year 7 and Year 12 each year, as well as in-year entrants where accessibility issues may arise. As for MTOAT schools generally, entry to Wallingford School, at any level, will be based purely on the school's admissions policy. Likewise, all students facing potential exclusion will be treated fairly following DfE guidance on suspensions and exclusions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>.
- To provide all students new to the school, irrespective of year group, with a relevant induction process. If it is deemed appropriate, tutor/teaching groups will be briefed as to how they can/should respond positively to a newcomer with a disability. This will always be carried out sensitively following consultation and approval from the incoming student/parents. Work in PSHE delivers information to help all students in their understanding of the needs of everyone in our school community.

- To ensure appropriate data for all students is analysed at least three times each year.
- To seek alternative arrangements in the case of on-site facilities not being accessible for any student.
- To collect views of students and parents regularly. All new parents and families to the school are made aware of the individual school's physical accessibility, as appropriate, and individual family needs are recorded. The student councils are also asked to feed back their views.

### **iii. Physical environment**

To ensure the needs of students and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments are taken into account when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site, premises and facilities, such as appropriate access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. Any external contractor being employed by the school will be required to support the Trust's disability awareness procedures.

### **iv. Provision of information**

- To be aware of local services, including those provided through the local authority, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested, whether this be in respect of students, the curriculum and learning environment, or for visitors and users of the school premises.
- To ensure no discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, marital status or disability in the recruitment and selection process. The aims of the recruitment and selection process will be to ensure that equality of opportunity is considered as an integral part of recruitment practice, thus encouraging diversity by reducing unnecessary barriers. Adjustments to enable disabled candidates to meet the requirements of the post will be considered.
- To ensure meetings of the school's local governing body are accessible to all attendees. The body includes the correct quota of parent representatives and their contact details are published in school documentation. When vacancies arise, the position is open to all eligible parties and a fair election is held.

## **5. Implementation and Review**

### **i. Financial planning and control**

The headteacher and senior leadership team, together with the Resources Committee will review the financial implications of the accessibility plan as part of the normal budget review process.

## ii. Review of policy and plan

- The policy will be reviewed every three years.
- Stakeholders specifically involved in the various aspects will be asked to contribute at the planning/implementation/review stages.

## 6. Other Associated Policies and Procedures

There are other policies and procedures that may be useful to check when considering the content of this policy:

- Wallingford School Accessibility Action Plan
- Wallingford School Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Wallingford School SEND Policy
- Wallingford School Health and Safety Policy
- Wallingford School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy