



ARUN COURT

THERAPY & EDUCATION

'Resilience and Perseverance lead to success'



Accessibility Plan Policy

Arun Court Schools takes its responsibilities with regards to all students being able to access our services very seriously. Whilst we publish schemes of work our very small learning groups and high level of adult support means that we create a bespoke experience for every child, with schemes being adapted to ensure participation as much as possible. We invest heavily in OT support and every learning spaces has a variety of learning, anxiety and concentration aids:

- Wobble cushions and wedges
- Writing Slopes, ergonomic pens and various OT pen recommendations
- Touch typing services
- Fiddle toys and concentration aids, weighted therapy, thera-putty
- OT areas with TRX, weighted therapy, OT peanut and exercise balls
- Saddle chairs for students which have had this recommendation via their annual OT report
- Barrington Stoke dyslexia novels, coloured papers, Dyslexia Today schemes. Toe by Toe reading schemes.

- One staff member trained in BSL, another trained in Makaton
- Lego Therapy (Sp & Lang), Art Counselling, Coaching, Counselling, Meditation and Mindfulness Teachers, animal based therapy, CBT and clinical psychology

What Specific Adjustments are made, and how do we intend to develop these further?

- **How is the curriculum differentiated and, at Key Stage 4, what alternative accreditation is offered?**

Students who are classed as high intensity have 1:1 mentor support all day and their key worker will ensure that the sessions are further differentiated. It is very important that students are on this level of support for a short period only as students must not be de-skilled, and need to work towards greater engagement. Such students will have a high level of mental health support including twice weekly clinical psychology.

We aim for all students to transition to a working group of 8, with 1 teacher and 2 members of the therapy team there for support. The class teacher differentiates by using different resources such as adapted worksheets, by the level of questioning they use and the take up time given, by ensuring a variety of learning styles are catered for in each session, and by the challenge level of the individual task. The Therapy Team members are in place to notice early signs of anxiety, to support in their reduction but to ensure that students are challenged to stay in the group longer and to engage with challenge; perseverance and resilience to always be the focus.

As students progress and show signs of improved mental health, the number of therapy team members in a class will reduce and students identified as being suitable for transition programmes will start to have less support and even greater academic challenge. Intense programmes of academic 'boosting' in English and maths can then be implemented to support students in catching up and in turn helping them to transition to larger settings. Many of our students have high IQs and are capable of achieving well academically once their mental health is supported.

Our core aim is to return students to larger settings if possible however some students will join us later and therefore may be in crisis within KS4. We offer a limited range of GCSE options (science, English Lang. maths, geography, media, art) plus students can take diplomas and participation certificates online in a variety of subjects of interest from football to ecosystems using Futurelearn with teacher support. We also have a sports coaching diploma and apprenticeship scheme supplied by an outside provider.

How is information for pupils, parents and the community is available in different formats, using Widgeo symbols, Braille, larger font or reduced / simplified language?

Our schools has access to Communicate in Print software to generate Widgeo symbols. We can also provide newsletters, the parent handbook and registration forms in large print formats. At this point in time we do not have braille facilities but this is an aspiration. We are able to provide support from a staff member to read forms and documentation.

What are our Plans to improve the signage in the buildings and grounds?

These can be seen in our disability access plan. We also have arrangements that could be put in place if a disabled parent needed support to attend a school event, e.g. we have a BSL signer for a parents' evening, we have a folding wheelchair and we can accommodate assistance animals.

How do we support students with specific medical conditions?

We will only administer regular medication or give regular physical medical support if a student has a long-term health condition (we do not administer Calpol for example). In such circumstances we will create an individual health plan and will recruit or train existing staff to ensure they are able to perform any medical duties appropriately. No student would be unable to access our provision purely on medical grounds.

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What is Disability Equality and how does the Equality Act impact on schools?

Under the Equality Act there is a requirement for public sector bodies, including schools, to promote equality for disabled people in every aspect of their work. Schools will need to take an organisational approach to formulating policy and practices, which positively promote disability.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies, and which extends to all protected characteristics – race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

This duty requires schools to adopt a proactive approach, mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities.

The duty does not just apply to disabled pupils; it applies to any non-educational services schools provide. The duty applies also to parents, members of staff, visitors to the school, local community members and to potential pupils of the future.

Schools can implement the general duty by actively reviewing all their policies, procedures and planned access improvements to remove barriers, with a view, for example, to greater recruitment and retention of disabled staff, greater participation of disabled pupils, disabled parents and community members.

What are the specific duties?

The specific duties require schools:

(a) to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and

(b) to prepare and publish equality objectives.

Schools had until 6 April 2012 to publish their initial information and their first set of objectives. They will then need to update their published information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years. Further advice and guidance is available in the Local Authority's Schools' Equality Toolkit.

Accessibility Plans

Schools are still required to have Accessibility Plans showing how they are planning strategically to increase access over time; the same duties as previously existed under the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010. The plan must show how the school is:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of schools to enable those with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- Improving the availability of accessible information to those with disabilities.

Schools will need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must review them regularly. An accessibility plan may be a freestanding document but may also be published as part of another document such as the School Development Plan, a Single Equality Plan. OFSTED inspections may include a school's accessibility plan as part of their review.

Requirement to provide Auxiliary Aids

From September 2012 schools are required to provide auxiliary aids (and services) for disabled pupils to overcome any disadvantage experienced in schools. Advice on meeting this requirement can be found on pages 17-20 of the EHRC's Reasonable Adjustments' Guidance in the Downloads' section. Alternatively, you can seek guidance from specialist staff from Integrated Disability Service Teaching & Learning. Remember many aids are relatively straightforward and inexpensive to supply.

Including children with medical needs

In September 2014 a new duty will come into force for governing bodies to ensure arrangements are in place in school to support pupils with medical conditions.

The guidance includes statutory and non-statutory advice under the Children and Families Act 2014. The statutory guidance applies to all maintained schools, academies and free schools. For children with SEN&D, this guidance should be read in conjunction with the new SEND Code of Practice.

The new guidance document reiterates existing good practice and clarifies accountability.

Children and young people with medical conditions are entitled to a full education and have the same rights of admission to school as other children. This means that no child with a medical condition should be denied admission or prevented from taking up a place in school because arrangements for their medical condition have not been made. The governing body must ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure that such children can access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child.

Governing bodies should ensure schools develop a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions that is reviewed regularly and is readily accessible to parents and school staff. This policy may be a separate policy or may be a sub-section included in the school's existing SEN & Disability policy.

Although there is **no requirement on teaching staff to administer medicines or undertake personal and health care procedures, governing bodies are required to ensure there are arrangements in place, including ensuring sufficient members of support staff are appropriately trained to undertake these roles as part of their core job description.**

Advice for schools on planning inclusive visits

The LEA has signed up to the national manifesto for "Learning outside the Classroom" aspiring to:

- Provide all young people with a wide range of experiences outside the classroom, including extended school activities and one or more residential visits
- Offer high quality learning experiences
- Enable schools to manage visits safely and efficiently.

Equality legislation sets out a clear expectation that disabled children and young people should be given the same opportunities to participate as their peers.

The Local Authority would advise all schools and settings to plan their educational visits and learning outside the classroom opportunities on the basis of assuming that ALL pupils will be able to take part.

For some children and young people with disabilities and additional needs the generic risk assessment for the activity will not be sufficient. The LA has devised some planning

checklists to help schools consider additional risks for these pupils. The checklists can be found in the Downloads and documents section on this page.

It is important that schools and settings involve parents, the pupil and, if appropriate, specialist support staff, as early as possible in the planning process, particularly when a residential stay is involved.

Under the Equality Act the school must make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage to their peers. This may include providing additional staffing and accessible transport or ensuring the venue is appropriate to the needs of the pupil concerned. The planning checklists should help highlight any reasonable adjustments needed.