



Accessibility Policy

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An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Discovery Academy is a community special school for pupils aged 5-16 with Autism Spectrum Conditions. Pupils often have a learning difficulty covering a wide range from slight to moderate learning difficulties. Some pupils have multiple difficulties such as physical difficulties, sensory impairments, emotional, social, communication and behaviour difficulties. All pupils have an Education, Health Care Plan which names Discovery Academy.
- 1.2. The Academy has a wide catchment area throughout the City of Sheffield, and the pupils come from a variety of socio and economic backgrounds. The school has a mixed population with White British, White Irish, White and Asian, Gypsy Roma, Black Caribbean, White and Black Caribbean, Iranian, Black African and White and Black African.
- 1.3. We believe that this Accessibility Plan is compliant with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting on progress of the Accessibility Plan over a 3-year period.

2. Access to the Curriculum

- 2.1. We provide a differentiated National Curriculum. We ensure all pupils can access activities that we offer and adaptations to equipment and activities are made to fulfil this aim. For pupils to access the curriculum lessons are highly differentiated and take account of individual learning difficulties. Priority is placed on pupil participation, as independently as is possible. Adults are clear about the learning objectives of the lesson, class and individuals. Good communication is supported by the use of signing, symbols. All pupils have access to appropriate computer technology to aid their learning.
- 2.2. The Academy has access to NHS Physiotherapist and Speech and Language Therapist and CAMHS professionals who have particular key pupils on their caseload. These professionals act as advisors to the Academy and supporting communication difficulties throughout the school.
- 2.3. The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEN inspector/advisors, and of appropriate health professionals to ensure barriers to learning are reduced and enable pupils to reach their full potential.

3. Access to the School Environment

- 3.1. The building has been adapted to suit pupils with mobility difficulties. The outdoor area is also fully accessible, and grounds maintained so that they can be used as outdoor classrooms. The school will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings.

4. Access to Information

- 4.1. All information issued by the school aims to be user friendly. Newsletters incorporate photographs.
- 4.2. Text messaging systems ensure letters are sent home to families securely. For those families not using electronic devices written copies are sent home. However, we encourage parents and professionals to take up the offer of having communications sent to them electronically. The recently reconstructed website will take into account accessibility in both its design format, the format of fonts and colours (Optional accessibility stylesheet changes body text to Open Dyslexic font) and its accessibility on multiple device screen sizes. It will offer the user the option of changing the language also.
- 4.3. The Academy will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

5. School Access Planning

- 5.1. To ensure outside access is enabled for main site classrooms to support ventilation.
- 5.2. To ensure there is a Discovery Academy communication promises whereby every form of communication and language is celebrated and supported.
- 5.3. To ensure the outside areas are accessible to all through renewed playground areas.

6. Access to Information

- 6.1. All information issued by the Academy aims to be user friendly. Newsletters incorporate photographs.
- 6.2. We encourage families and professionals to take up the offer of having communications sent to them electronically.
- 6.3. For a child or young person with a visual impairment we receive support from Visual Impairment team in modifying printed materials into a format to meet the needs of individual children and for parents who might also have a visual impairment.
- 6.4. The recently constructed website takes into account accessibility in both its design format, the format of fonts and colours (Optional accessibility stylesheet changes body text to Open Dyslexic font) and its accessibility on multiple device screen sizes.
- 6.5. The Academy will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the City Council, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

7. School Access Planning

- 7.1. Develop a horticulture sensory area - July 2026 (ongoing with the support of the Friends of Discovery Academy)
- 7.2. To improve staff confidence in Makaton signing
- 7.3. Ensure the school has nominated support areas located around the school for pupils to self soothe and de-escalate both in and out of the building.



Aim	Current Good Practice	Objectives	Action To Be Taken	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Success Criteria
Ensure the staff team are equipped with training to meet the needs of children who use Makaton and other forms of communication	PECs symbols Ipad use accessibility settings.	To ensure the staff are confident with using different types of communication.	Improve conversation stations. Build into staff weekly training signs of the week Monitor use of communication across the school year	VW	July 2026	All children will have access to communication aids as part of understanding the wider curriculum.
Develop a horticulture area to support pupils learning.	The school playground is suitable for the social times for pupils.	To ensure the outdoor learning areas are well equipped for all learning needs.	To work with external group to enhance the learning areas outside in relation to horticulture. Ensure it provides safety and signage suitable for the needs of our pupils disabilities.	EP	July 2026 ongoing	All pupils will have access to learning outside that enhances their life skills.

Appendix 1

Dreamers...Believers... achievers

Why – *Vision... 'head'*

- **To** improve the life chances of students
- **To** develop their self-worth and self-belief.
- **To** help them learn to respect and build relationships.
- **To** support them to dream along their own path of self-discovery.

How – *Values... 'heart'*

- **Ensure** we build memories today.
- **Ensure** we thank each other today.
- **Ensure** we make the world a better place today.
- **Ensure** we lay our foundations of lifelong learning today.
- **Ensure** we discover our interest and potential today.
- **Ensure** we grow our capacity for happiness today.

What – *Aims... 'hands'*

- **Offer** a global curriculum that is purposeful, relevant and collaborative, where learning is approached by examining the big questions.
- **Offer** an environment that gives a sense of belonging, safety, worth, dignity and hope.
- **Offer** an approach whereby all members of the school community have an entitlement and commitment to their own learning journey and self-discovery.
- **Offer** a community where parents, carers and families act as co-educators.
- **Offer** a culture that is built on curiosity, professional development and a focus on developing and connecting research into classrooms.

Access and School Policy and Procedures

We adhere to Equality Act of 2010 throughout all our policies and practice to ensure pupils access learning and the school environment.

Discovery Academy is a Specialist Academy for students aged between 7 to 16 years who experience mild to moderate developmental delays and coexisting diagnosis such as Autism Spectrum Conditions, social and emotional mental health needs. The Academy embodies an ethos whereby kindness, care and self-belief are the foundations to learning. Students thrive in an immersive learning environment where they own and progress the world around them to ensure that learning never stops. Student happiness is a priority to us and we realise that all our students have experienced challenges along their journey so far. Staff expertly adapt learning to ensure students are engaged in all their learning and often don't realise they are learning at all. Learning takes place when students feel safe, stimulated and secure. In this, the play-based approach of challenged based learning ensures that learning takes into account stages of development for every student. We truly believe that it takes a village to raise a child and with the support of families together, we enable students to have the skills in which to lead a promising and fulfilling adult life.