



ACCESS TO WORK FOR STAFF WITH DISABILITIES

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this policy, and in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability Act 2001 and amendments of 2002, 2003 and 2005, disability means:

“someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

Therefore the policy should be applied to assist the following persons:

- Disabled staff (where the disability is likely to last 12 months or longer);
- Potential employees in need of support at a job interview at the School;
- Staff employed at the School who develop a disability during their term of employment.

Access to Work (AtW) aims to assist disabled staff by providing practical support, and help meet additional costs associated with overcoming work related obstacles resulting from disability.

The School is committed to equal, independent access to all employees and pupils. It will seek to promote access improvements for employees, pupils and the wider community in conjunction with the local education authority where necessary.

Aims

Access is a human rights issue and disabled staff should have independent opportunity to fulfil their employment potential. The access to work policy aims:

1. To assist those staff who have a disability to engage fully in employment.
2. To enable those staff with a disability to maximise potential and contribute fully to the life of the School.
3. To ensure disabled staff have equal access to recruitment, training and promotion.
4. To have disability needs identified, assessed and supported, in agreement with the member of staff.
5. To raise awareness of disability within school, and to challenge prejudices in relation to disability.
6. To make every reasonable effort to enable staff who develop a disability while employed at the School, to remain employed within it.
7. To ensure provision of services necessary to assist staff with disabilities.

Trelales Primary School

8. To ensure the provision of services that further the integration of staff with disabilities in ways that promote a positive image of persons with disabilities and enhance their self-esteem.
9. To provide support and make adjustments for staff, and applicants for vacancies, who have disabilities. The School will respect their rights to privacy and confidentiality.

Trelales Primary School

SECTION 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a) The Role of the LEA

- i) Provide a proactive employment relations consultancy service to the Senior Leadership Team offering practical advice and solutions to employee disability rights and disability legislation.
- ii) To drive forward a continuous access improvement programme to ensure effective recruitment to the School.

b) The Role of the Governors

- i) To develop a set of comprehensive employment policies and procedures which are consistent with current disability legislation and avoid disability discrimination.
- ii) To produce 'accessibility plans' as required by law in anticipation of disabled persons applying for a post.
- iii) To develop a strategic action plan for disability access to avoid practising disability discrimination inadvertently.
- iv) Create a budget heading into which monies are delegated to support access to work provision for employees in school.
- v) To allocate responsibility for the implementation and provision of the action plan.
- vi) To evaluate policies regularly making adjustments in the light of new disability legislation and recommendations.
- vii) To acquire a broad and thorough understanding of disability legislation and of the particular needs of staff with disability.

c) The Role of the Headteacher

- i) To ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- ii) To review job descriptions to ensure that they do not unfairly exclude a disabled person from applying for the post.
- iii) Ensure that all candidates have access to, and provision for, an interview that can be held without embarrassment or difficulty.
- iv) To include a statement in all interview letters/phone calls or emails, asking candidates whether they have any special needs relating to a disability.
- v) To consult with relevant staff, the LEA Disability Co-ordinator and Occupational Health Consultants, on whether adjustments will be needed for the applicant to carry out their role. To discuss this with the applicant at interview.
- vi) To provide a disability awareness training programme for those staff who are responsible for someone with a disability, and for those who work alongside a colleague in a support role.
- vii) To provide training time for the member of staff to learn to use equipment and resources.
- viii) To ensure that the member of staff has allocated time for rehabilitation, assessment and medical treatment.
- ix) To implement recommendations regarding an employee's disability, e.g. making 'reasonable adjustments' to their job description and responsibilities, and working hours.
- x) To seek advice from a Fire Officer on the emergency evacuation of buildings, and put in place any arrangements for the safe evacuation from the building of anyone with a disability.
- xi) To put in place a complaints procedure for concerns about disability in the workplace, and access to work.

Trelales Primary School

d) The Role of the Senior Leadership Team (D/H i/c Disability/Access/Premises)

- i) To have responsibility for implementation and review of access and disability policies, and develop strategies that ensure continued improvements in access for disabled staff.
- ii) To ensure that 'reasonable adjustments' are made to the physical features of the premises where these put disabled staff at a disadvantage.
- iii) To offer INSET to all staff on Disability Awareness Training ensuring that all who need to attend, do so, e.g. managers and those working alongside a colleague with, for example a sensory disability.
- iv) To take responsibility for the provision and implementation of the action plan.
- v) To develop policies and programmes which avoid disability discrimination.
- vi) To instigate a needs assessment to 'Access to Work', Job Centre Plus, at the request of a member of staff and to support that person through the procedure.
- vii) To draw up a job description for a support person for individual members of staff with disability.
- viii) To oversee the installation of specialist equipment, and monitor its efficient running and maintenance, to ensure continuous access to work.
- ix) To manage and oversee the decision-making process about the use and ownership of any specialist equipment, when a member of staff with a disability leaves their post.
- x) To monitor the effectiveness of the policy in conjunction with all interested parties.

e) The Role of the Lead Learner

- i) To implement the 'Access to Work' policy in their area.
- ii) To ensure colleagues with a disability get information in a format most suited to them, e.g. audio tape, large print.
- iii) To be involved in the support process and assist, if asked to help, with the Access to Work audit.
- iv) To liaise with members of staff nominated to support and assist disabled colleagues, as appropriate.
- v) To ensure that all of the School's administration procedures/forms are audited for disability access and that alternative media are made available as appropriate.
- vi) To monitor the success of the new media and resources in providing the improvements in access for the disabled person.
- vii) To ensure opportunities for promotion and training are available, and that attainable performance management targets are set.

f) The Role of a Disabled Member of Staff

- i) To declare the disability prior to interview (for a new member of staff).
- ii) To declare the disability when advised by the medical profession (for an existing member of staff).
- iii) To apply for a grant, where appropriate from the Access to Work Programme, in accordance with the guidelines stipulated by Job Centre Plus.
- iv) To undergo a work place assessment and prepare relevant documentation (with assistance if necessary) that will enable the auditor to prepare an Access to Work report.
- v) To work with the Bursar to order equipment recommended for use to help overcome work related problems.
- vi) To undertake relevant training, especially with new resources and equipment.

SECTION 3: PRACTICAL ISSUES

In order to introduce Access to Work, to support an employee, consideration to the principles of the process must be understood.

1. Access to Work is run by the Department for Work and Pensions at Job Centre Plus.
2. Access to Work (AtW) provides assistance for disabled people in paid employment, or in a job start, to have practical resources and financial support to meet additional costs associated with overcoming work-related obstacles resulting from disability.
3. The key principle of the scheme is to meet the additional costs of employing a disabled person.
4. To be eligible, employees must have a disability that is likely to last twelve months or longer. To qualify, new employees should make an application to Access to Work within six weeks of joining the School in order for Access to Work to pay 100% of the costs. Any other member of staff who becomes disabled may apply with the School paying the first £300 contribution with a further 20% of the cost up to a ceiling of £10,000. Most schools could be asked if they are willing to pay a further contribution. Access to Work will pay 100% of the costs of equipment or adaptations over £10,000.
5. Once the application is made, a needs assessment is undertaken in school by an independent assessor from Access to Work. Following this, a report is prepared setting out both the minimum requirements to meet the disability and the costs of equipment and support. The School should then purchase equipment and/or recruit additional personnel to support the person with the disability.
6. Practical help in the classroom can take the form of CCTV cameras, whiteboards, laptop, specialist furniture, alterations to premises or the working environment. Practical assistance can take the form of:
 - in-class support for a teacher;
 - additional assistance with administration;
 - assistance with communication for the visually impaired;
 - a communicator for hearing impaired or deaf people;
 - assistance with travel if the person cannot travel unaided.
7. If the disabled person leaves employment, an agreement needs to be reached about use and ownership of any specialist equipment.
8. Re-assessment in the workplace takes place every three years.
9. Access to Work funding is not retrospective. It will not refund reasonable adjustments that have already been made.

Signed

Date