



## **CEDARS ACADEMY TRUST**

Cedars Academy: Low Fell

Cedars Academy: High Heworth

# **Accessibility Plan**

**2025 to 2028**

|                        |                                                  |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Policy owner</b>    | Gareth Kyle, Academy Business Leader             |
| <b>Approved by</b>     | Resources, Audit & Risk Committee                |
| <b>Version</b>         | 1.3                                              |
| <b>Date approved</b>   | 17/06/2026                                       |
| <b>Plan period</b>     | September 2025 to August 2028, reviewed annually |
| <b>Next review due</b> | Summer 2027                                      |
| <b>Status</b>          | Approved                                         |
| <b>Published on</b>    | Trust website and National College               |
| <b>Applies to</b>      | The Trust as a whole, across both sites          |

# The Plan

## 1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1** This plan shows how the Trust intends, over time, to increase access to education for disabled pupils at Cedars Academy: Low Fell and Cedars Academy: High Heworth.
- 1.2** The plan covers three years, from September 2025 to August 2028. It is reviewed every year.
- 1.3** Every pupil at the Trust has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This plan deals with access across the Trust. Support for an individual pupil is set out in that pupil's EHCP.
- 1.4** The Trust aims to treat all pupils, prospective pupils, staff, trustees, parents and visitors fairly, and takes reasonable steps to avoid placing anyone at a substantial disadvantage. It works with disabled pupils, their families and outside agencies to remove or reduce barriers to learning, so that every pupil can learn, achieve and take part fully in Trust life.

## 2. Legal framework

- 2.1** Schedule 10, paragraph 3 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Trust to have an accessibility plan. The plan must set out how the Trust will:
  - increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take part in the curriculum, including the wider curriculum such as clubs, leisure and cultural activities and visits;
  - improve the physical environment, including physical aids to access education, so that disabled pupils can take better advantage of education and the services the Trust provides; and
  - improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is given in writing to pupils who are not disabled, such as handouts, timetables and information about events.  
Information must take account of the pupil's disability and the preferred format of pupils and parents, and be provided within a reasonable time.
- 2.2** The Trust must implement the plan, keep it under review during the period it covers, and revise it where needed. It must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources to it (Equality Act 2010, Schedule 10, paragraphs 3 and 4).
- 2.3** The plan sits alongside the Trust's wider duties under the Equality Act 2010: not to discriminate against disabled pupils, and to make reasonable adjustments, including providing auxiliary aids and services, so that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage. The Trust also has regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015).
- 2.4** A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities (Equality Act 2010, section 6).

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

- The Trust Board, through the Resources, Audit & Risk Committee, approves the plan, makes sure it is resourced and receives an annual report on progress.
- The three co-headteachers are jointly responsible for putting the plan into practice. Each site Headteacher leads the actions at their own site.

- The Director of Inclusion leads the curriculum and information actions for pupils and makes sure they link to pupils' EHCPs.
- The Academy Business Leader leads the physical environment actions, links them to the premises budget, keeps the plan up to date and publishes it.
- All staff must make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils in their day to day work and should report any barrier to access they find.

#### 4. How the plan was prepared

- 4.1** The priorities in this plan were identified by a planning group made up of the trustee with a lead for inclusion, the three co-headteachers and the Academy Business Leader.
- 4.2** The Trust keeps looking for ways to improve access through the information it collects, questionnaires and conversations with parents, carers and other stakeholders.

#### 5. Our setting

- 5.1** The Trust is a special academy serving Gateshead, with a small number of places for pupils from outside the borough. Cedars Academy: Low Fell teaches pupils from Reception to Year 11. Cedars Academy: High Heworth teaches pupils in Key Stages 3 to 5.
- 5.2** Pupils can join at any point in their school life, although most join in the primary years or Key Stage 3.
- 5.3** The majority of pupils have a moderate learning difficulty combined with specific communication difficulties. Many have associated needs such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties.
- 5.4** Cedars Academy: High Heworth moved to the former Colegate Primary School site in September 2025. The physical environment actions in section 6.2 apply to both sites.

#### 6. Action plan

The actions below are grouped under the three areas the law requires, with a fourth group for equality and inclusion across the Trust. Section 6.2 is the premises section of the plan.

| Target                                                                                                | Strategies and lead                                                                                   | Outcome                               | Timeframe |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>6.1 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION</b>                                                                     |                                                                                                       |                                       |           |
| To ensure that the Accessibility Plan becomes an annual item at the Resources, Audit & Risk Committee | Clerk to the Trust Board to add to the committee's annual cycle of business: Clerk to the Trust Board | Adherence to legislation              | Annually  |
| To improve staff awareness of disability issues                                                       | Review staff training needs. Provide training for members of the Trust community as appropriate: SLT  | Whole Trust community aware of issues | On-going  |
| To ensure that all policies consider the implications of disability access                            | Consider during review of policies: SLT                                                               | Policies reflect current legislation  | On-going  |

| Target                                                                                                                                                                                   | Strategies and lead                                                                                                                                                                       | Outcome                                                                                                          | Timeframe                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>6.2 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                  |                                                            |
| To ensure that, where possible, the Academy buildings and grounds are accessible for all children and adults and continue to improve access to the school's physical environment for all | Audit of accessibility of Academy buildings and grounds by Trustees: Suggest actions and implement as budget allows: Facilities/Premises Team                                             | Modifications will be made to the school building to improve access                                              | On-going                                                   |
| Improve signage and external access for visually impaired people                                                                                                                         | Yellow strip mark step edges: Facilities Manager                                                                                                                                          | Modifications will be made to the school to improve access: Visually impaired people feel safe in school grounds | On-going                                                   |
| Ensure all disabled pupils can be safely evacuated                                                                                                                                       | Put in place Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for all pupils with difficulties: Develop a system to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities: Facilities Manager     | All disabled pupils and staff working alongside are safe in the event of a fire                                  | On-going                                                   |
| Ensure accessibility of access to IT equipment                                                                                                                                           | Alternative equipment in place to ensure access to all hardware including hall. Liaise with VI/HI on information with regard to the visual impaired and hearing impaired pupils: Services | Hardware and software available to meet the needs of children as appropriate                                     | On-going and as required                                   |
| Ensure hearing equipment in classrooms to support hearing impaired                                                                                                                       | Seek support from LA hearing impaired unit on the appropriate equipment: Services                                                                                                         | All children have access to the appropriate equipment and support                                                | On-going                                                   |
| All fire escape routes are suitable for all                                                                                                                                              | Make sure all areas of school can have wheelchair access: Egress routes visual check: Facilities Manager/H&S Team                                                                         | All disabled staff, pupils and visitors able to have safe independent egress                                     | On-going and as required and as appropriate: Weekly checks |
| Incorporation of appropriate colour schemes, lighting, window treatments, etc. as funds allow                                                                                            | As part of ongoing rolling programme of decoration and refurbishment                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                  | On-going as funds allow                                    |
| <b>6.3 CURRICULUM</b>                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                  |                                                            |
| To continue to train staff to enable them to meet the needs of children with a range of SEND                                                                                             | Review the needs of children and provide training for staff as needed: Services                                                                                                           | Staff are able to enable all children to access the curriculum                                                   | On-going                                                   |

| Target                                                                                                                                                  | Strategies and lead                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Outcome                                                                                                                | Timeframe           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| To ensure that all children are able to access all out of school activities, eg clubs, trips, residential visits                                        | Review of out of academy provision to ensure compliance with legislation: Services                                                                                                                                                                                   | All providers of out of school education will comply with legislation to ensure that the needs of all children are met | On-going            |
| To provide specialist equipment to promote participation in learning by all pupils                                                                      | Assess the needs of the children in each class and provide equipment as needed, eg special pencil grips, headphones, writing slopes: Services                                                                                                                        | Children will develop independent learning skills                                                                      | Termly and on-going |
| To meet the needs of individuals during statutory tests and exams                                                                                       | Children will be assessed in accordance with regular classroom practice, and access arrangements (additional time, use of equipment) applied for and put in place as needed: Exams Officer                                                                           | Barriers to learning will be reduced or removed, enabling children to achieve their full potential                     | Annually            |
| <b>6.4 WRITTEN AND OTHER INFORMATION</b>                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                        |                     |
| Review information to parents and carers to ensure it is accessible                                                                                     | Provide information and letters in clear print in simple English: Office<br>Office staff will support and help parents to access information and complete forms<br>Ensure the website and all documents on it can be accessed by the visually impaired: Website Team | All parents receive information in a form they can access and understand the headlines of Trust information            | As needed, on-going |
| Improve the delivery of information in writing in an appropriate format                                                                                 | Provide suitably enlarged, clear print for pupils with a visual impairment                                                                                                                                                                                           | Improved communication to all                                                                                          | As needed, on-going |
| Annual review information to be as accessible as possible                                                                                               | Develop child friendly EHCP annual review formats: Services                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Staff more aware of pupils' preferred method of communication                                                          | On-going            |
| Provide information in other languages, or other formats, for pupils, prospective pupils or parents who have difficulty with hearing or language        | Access to translators and sign language interpreters to be considered and offered where possible: Office/Services                                                                                                                                                    | Pupils and parents feel supported and included                                                                         | As required         |
| Provide information in simple language, symbols and large print for prospective pupils or parents who have difficulty with standard printed information | Ensure the website meets accessibility requirements for people with a visual impairment. Ensure the prospectus is available on the Trust website: Office/Website Team                                                                                                | All can access information about the Trust                                                                             | On-going            |

| Target                                                                                               | Strategies and lead                                                                     | Outcome                                        | Timeframe |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| To ensure that parents who are unable to attend because of a disability can access parents' evenings | Staff to hold parents' evenings by phone or send home written information: T&L/Services | Parents are informed of their child's progress | Termly    |

## 7. Monitoring and review

- 7.1** The Academy Business Leader reports progress against the action plan to the Resources, Audit & Risk Committee once a year.
- 7.2** The plan is reviewed every summer. The next review is due in Summer 2027. A new three-year plan will be written for September 2028.
- 7.3** The plan is published on the Trust website. A copy in large print or another format is available on request from either site office.

## 8. Linked policies and documents

- SEND Information Report
- Health and Safety Policy, including Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans
- Allergy Safety Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans