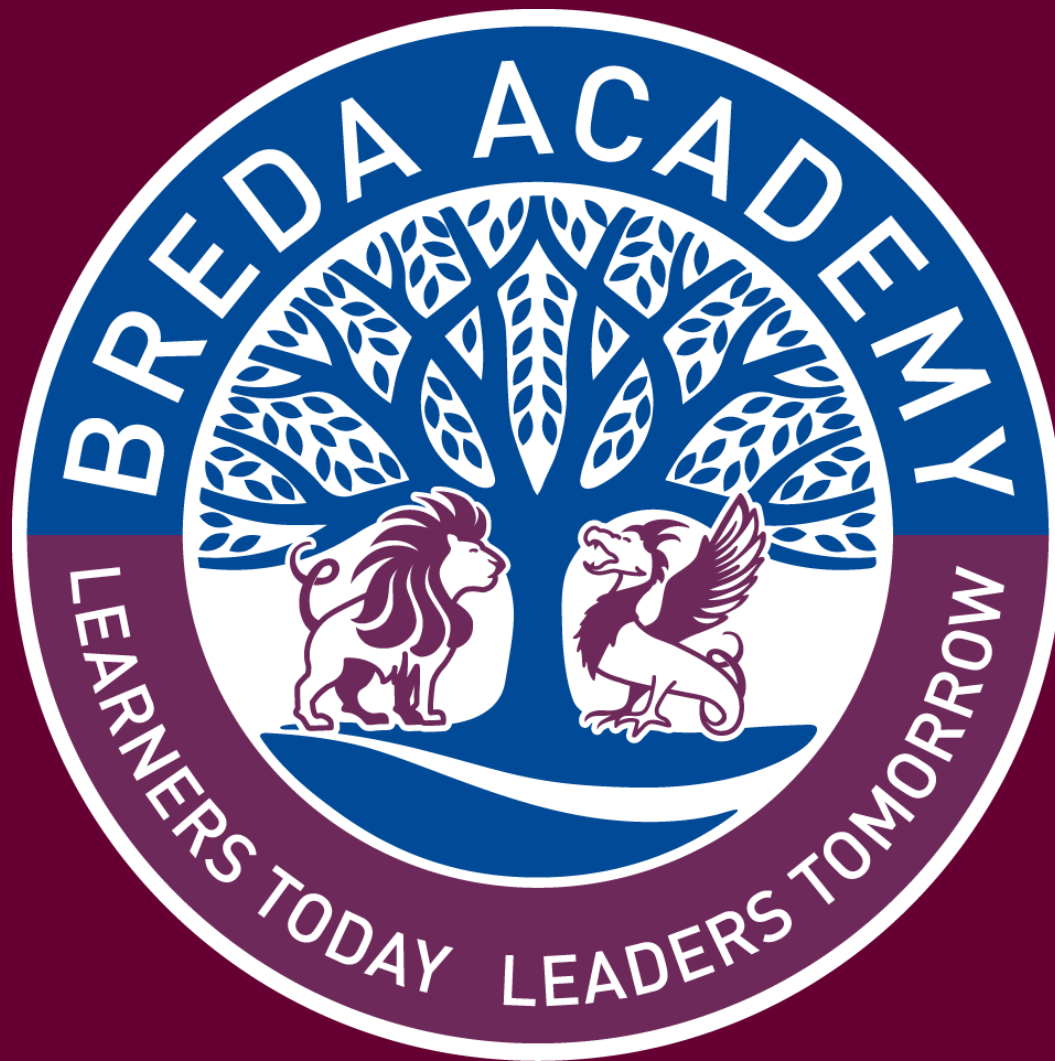


ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



BREDA ACADEMY

- **Reviewed by the BoG on 27.09.22**
- **To be reviewed again before Sept 2025**

Accessibility Plan

Introduction

Breda Academy welcomes the opportunity to build upon our current position and demonstrate how we intend within the given timeframe, to improve and increase the access to our school for both current and prospective students with a disability. This accessibility plan anticipates where possible the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs in the following three areas: the curriculum, physical environment and provision of information.

School Profile

Breda Academy opened in **September 2015** as the result of a joint development proposal to cease provision at Knockbreda High School and Newtownbreda High School in conjunction with the creation of a new school. Breda Academy serves the growing needs of children and young people within the Education Authority-Belfast and South Eastern regions.

The school is situated within a tranquil setting on Newtownbreda Road, it is located approximately 4 miles from Belfast city centre. The school is within walking distance to Belvoir Estate and other close, community areas. The school is close to most public transport routes.

At present, the school delivers a holistic and innovative educational experience to over 680 students who come from a diverse range of backgrounds. It caters for students of all abilities and has a dedicated SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) team as part of the continuum of provision offered by the school. It is also fully committed to providing high standards and access to a quality educational experience for students with a range of disabilities and to ensure that visitors can access our premises and avail of information as well.

Our Mission Statement

Breda Academy aims to be a safe, caring community of life-long learners where positive relationships, based on courtesy, commitment and co-operation, enable young people to develop their skills, resilience and confidence for success in life and society.

We strive to deliver our mission which is to deliver high-quality education to every child. Breda Academy shows that it is fully committed to providing equal opportunities for participation in all aspects of school life for both students with a disability and non-disabled students.

Our school has established and continues to maintain strong partnerships working within our Area Learning Community and actively seeks training and shares examples of good practice and resources with other schools within the cluster, including Fleming Fulton Special School. The SEND team have also established strong links with Alternative Education Provisions within the area, Exceptional Teaching Arrangements Provisions and Ardmore Special School.

Background Legislation

At Breda Academy we work within the current legislation and requirements to carry out our duties to support both current and prospective students with a disability.

According to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), a student with a disability is considered to be a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Following the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005, (SENDO) we endeavour to proactively avoid the potential for discrimination on the grounds of disability in our admission arrangements, education and associated services provided or offered and suspension and expulsion arrangements, by strategically planning to:

- Not treat students less favourably for a reason related to their disability (unless it can be shown that this is justified);
- Make reasonable adjustments to avoid placing students with a disability at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled student; and
- Increase the access for current and prospective students to all aspects of school life, education and associated services we provide.

Since SENDO does not require us to either alter physical features or provide auxiliary aids or services, this accessibility plan should be viewed alongside our current Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy for those students with a disability who may require additional provision to be made to support their needs in line with the graduated approach as laid out by the Code of Practice.

The SEND policy outlines the graduated approach in line with the Code of Practice and shows what additional provision we can offer to support students with SEND. The definition of special educational needs (SEN) includes students with significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or a disability which means that a student cannot make full use of the educational facilities generally provided for children of their age in ordinary schools, or they have not attained the lower limit of compulsory school age and is, or would be if special educational provision were not made for them, likely to fall within either of these positions when they are of compulsory school age.

It is important to remember that some children with a disability will have a special educational need and conversely, not all children with SEN will have a disability.

Documentation

The following documents were useful in the forming of this policy:

- Department of Education (1998) Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs
- Department of Education (2009) 'Every School a Good School: A policy for school improvement.'
- Department of Education (2019) 'Every School a Good School: The Governor's Role: A Guide for Governors.'
- Education Authority (2021) Accessibility Planning: Guidance for Schools
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2006) 'Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for School.'
- JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

- Department of Education (2005) Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs
- School Development Plan, Breda Academy, 2021-22

Accessibility Plan

Under Article 18 of SENDO, the aim of the accessibility plan for Breda Academy is to outline in writing how we will allocate adequate resources to, implement, review and revise the plan over a period of three years in order to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school's curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and
- Improve the delivery to disabled students within a reasonable timeframe, and in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parent/carers, of information which is usually provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

In carrying out these duties, we have taken into consideration the 'Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools', which was produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in 2006. We also draw upon guidance set out in the document 'Accessibility Planning: Information for Schools', which was issued by the Education Authority (2021).

It is anticipated that by making reasonable adjustments to overcome the barriers in each of the three planning areas identified above, that neither current nor prospective students who are disabled will be treated less favourably or placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled students in accessing all aspects of school life.

Information Gathering

Data capture forms are used to collect information about students coming into our school and from their previous educational setting. The information is treated in the strictest confidence. Parent/carers are encouraged to make us aware of any changes to their child's disability.

Some of the services that have either been involved, are currently involved or may potentially be involved in supporting children within the school include:

The Autism Advisory and Intervention Service, Behaviour Support Service and Provisions, Language and Communication Service as well as SEND inclusion (Learning and Medical Needs) Service.

Current Position

Although the intention of an accessibility plan is to identify a series of actions to increase access to our school for disabled students, the information gathered and audit carried out, revealed examples of good practice in each area:

Curriculum

Breda Academy delivers the broad and balanced Northern Ireland Curriculum which aims to empower young people to develop their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

In recognition of SENDO, reasonable adjustments are made to differentiate the curriculum, considering the preferred teaching and learning styles of students across a range of disabilities. Specific access arrangements, adjustments for homework, fine motor skills programmes, learning support and resources needed such as coloured overlays, pre-printed handouts with key vocabulary, excuse me passes, are all available to help a student access the curriculum.

A range of break and lunchtime clubs and other options are available for students who may have trouble navigating the school/playground. Students with a disability are encouraged to participate in all extra-curricular activities.

Risk assessments are carried out ahead of organising trips and accessible transport is used as appropriate.

*Some students with a disability may have specific needs and they will be provided with support which is additional to or otherwise different from that which is widely available. These students will have their support outlined in an individual education plan (IEP) and appropriate targets set according to their priority areas of need. Their progress in meeting these targets will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that the reasonable adjustments being made are effective. For some students, a teaching assistant may be funded by the EA to support the learning and care needs of the disabled student, so that they can access the curriculum.

Physical School Premises

Breda Academy is comprised of a main school building which is split over 3 levels, ground floor, first floor and second floor. In addition, there is a separate two-story block for Technology and Science and an additional 10 mobile units which serve as classrooms. The site has additional features such as a playing field, football pitches, wooded area, outdoor gym and a car park.

Within the main school building and the additional Technology and Science there is an accessible lift to all levels.

Each entrance to the school is fully accessible, with ramps, grab rails and automatic, accessible doors. Accessible doors are available throughout the whole school. All areas can be accessed via ramps.

The school has an accessible toilet with grab rails, alongside accessible changing facilities.

Two designated accessible parking spaces have been secured in front of the main reception area.

Emergency alarm system caters for hearing impaired, within certain locations throughout the school.

Information

The use of ICT with a range of accessible features including voice-activated software, is encouraged, and promoted throughout the school to enhance all aspects of teaching and learning. Staff and students at Breda Academy have access to a range of software and resources on C2k which are designed to support the delivery of written information.

Written material is provided in different formats for lessons, including dyslexia friendly formats, visually impaired formats and different formats for newcomer learners.

A school website (in a wide variety of different languages) is available so that information regarding school life can be shared with students, their parent/carers, and the wider community.

The use of the 'School Comms' system, is widely used to keep parent/carers up to date and as a means of digital communication.

Information that is required to ensure the health and safety of students with a range of medical conditions is shared with staff and can be found on the medical register on SIMS.

Breda Academy has allocated, trained first aiders within their staff. First aid certificates are updated as necessary in accordance with the guidelines.

All medication is kept in a central safe and secure place as appropriate within the school office.

For some students with a disability, a care plan is provided by the Health and Social Care Trust which details the procedures to follow to meet the needs of the student. Staff receive regular and appropriate training as required.

The Administration of Medicine and First Aid Policy outlines the procedures for storing and administration of medicines in school. (April 2022). Consent forms completed for any medication that is required to be taken in school by students because of their disability are completed by parent/carers and maintained in line with the school's GDPR policy. All medication given is recorded.

School Accessibility Action Plan

Breda Academy acknowledges that there is a requirement to build upon the current good practice which exists, by continuing and reacting where necessary, to take steps that are reasonable to avoid discrimination by a placing a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage to non-disabled people within all aspects of school life.

Article 18 of SENDO places a responsibility on our school to plan strategically to find ways to overcome barriers that students with a disability may experience in accessing education and associated services provided by the school.

Efforts to improve accessibility to all aspects of the curriculum, throughout 2022-23 will include:

- High-quality teaching strategies as the starting point to meet the needs of students with a disability;
- Identification of adjustments, resources and provisions that are available for students with a disability at whole school level;
- Effective deployment of additional adult assistance;
- Training for all staff;
- A review of all school policies and procedures; and
- Promotion of the presence of disability e.g. through displays, information of notice boards and hosting events throughout the school.
- Investigation into loop induction system for Assembly Hall

The following areas for improvement have been identified to enhance the accessibility of the physical environment, within 2022-23:

- Reduced clutter in classrooms, invitational learning environments.
- Well-ordered classrooms, well equipped with resources.
- Dyslexia Friendly classrooms, with visuals, use of appropriate aids, use of varying written formats.
- Further development of sensory room.

Improvements to the provision of information that is normally provided in written form, within 2022-23 will include:

- Clear, straightforward and simple communication with students, parent/carers and the community;
- Increased use of visuals.
- Increased use of Dyslexia Friendly, paper and formats.

Targets for improvement are in line with Breda's school development plan and the Special Educational Needs and Disability departmental development plan.

Review

Breda Academy's Board of Governors have the overall duty to implement the accessibility plan. They will monitor the school's success in meeting targets by reviewing and reporting on it annually, or earlier if necessary. It will be made available for consideration by the Department of Education, Education Authority, or the Education Training Inspectorate, in a timely manner, if required.

Revise

The accessibility plan is valid for a period of three years. It will be revised at the end of the three-year cycle.

Breda Academy acknowledges that it may not be possible for all changes to be completed within the lifecycle of this accessibility plan and if so, these actions may be taken forward into plans for the following academic year(s).

Confidentiality

Breda Academy respects the right of the student with a disability to have privacy. A student (if the school believes they have sufficient understanding of the nature of the request) or a parent/carers may request that the nature and existence of the disability is treated as confidential.

At Breda Academy, we treat all information provided with respect and in line with our GDPR policy. We will take any such request into consideration when deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable and discuss with parent/carers and the student as appropriate to identify what can be reasonably expected for the school to offer without infringing upon the request for confidentiality.

However, those with parent/carers responsibility and the student must be made aware of circumstances (such as safeguarding, health and safety), in which it may be necessary for confidential information to be disclosed to maintain the best interests and safety of the child. They will be informed of when such information has been shared.

Complaints Procedure

Breda Academy's Board of Governors have taken steps in advance that are reasonable within the school context to avoid the potential for discrimination that cannot be justified. They have made adjustments to ensure that the physical environment, curriculum, and delivery of information are accessible for current and prospective students with a disability so that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage to non-disabled students.

However, both current and prospective students who have a disability and their parent/carers are encouraged to firstly engage with the school and speak to Mr Perry, Acting Principal, if they have further knowledge about the effect of their disability or to express suggestions that may support them. Sometimes we may be able to agree to and implement the requested adjustments.

In other cases, if this does not lead to a resolution, a formal complaint can be lodged. A copy of the school's complaints procedure can be provided by the school and is also available on the school's website. In such cases, the Board of Governors may require some time to take this latest information into consideration and may seek input from others including expert opinion before deciding if it is reasonable to take the steps to make these adjustments within the context of the school. Once a decision has been reached about whether the adjustment suggested is reasonable, we will write to you setting out the decision and the reason.

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) is a free, independent, and confidential service that can be availed of if you need support in trying to resolve a disagreement with the school or the Education Authority in relation to SEND. Contact details are as follows:

Service: Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service
Address: Global Mediation (DARS)
55-59 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8FE

Phone number: 02890 726060

Email address: DARS@globalmediation.co.uk

If there is a disagreement between the adjustments provided by the school and what is sought by the student with a disability or their parent/carers, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST), will make the ultimate decision determining whether the step is reasonable for the school to take or if discrimination has occurred by its failure to do so.

Contact details are provided below:

Service: Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

Address: 2nd Floor

Royal Courts of Justice

Chichester Street

BELFAST

BT1 3JF

Phone number: 03002007812

Email address: tribunalsunit@courtsni.gov.uk

Links to other policies

The accessibility plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, documents and plan:

- Admissions
- Safeguarding
- Anti-Bullying
- Complaints
- General Data Protection
- Health and Safety
- Positive behaviour
- School trips and educational visits
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Transition for students with SEND
- Suspensions and Expulsions
- Views of the child, students with SEND
- The Administration of Medicine and First Aid Policy

Availability of the Accessibility Plan

Upon request, a copy of the accessibility plan can be made available either via email or post and in an alternative format if necessary by contacting:

Name: Mrs D Curry

Designation: Personal Assistant to the Principal

Address: Breda Academy

Newtownbreda Road

Belfast

BT8 6PY

Phone number: 02890645374

Email address: contact@breda.academy

The Accessibility Plan is also available on our school's website: <https://www.breda.academy/>

All efforts have been made to ensure that the accessibility plan is as jargon-free as possible and is presented in a clear design and layout.



Signature – Principal

Signature – Chairperson of the Board of Governors

Date: September 2022