



The Thomas Adams School

Policy Statement

Access to the School for Students with Disabilities

Updated August 2021

Reviewed by Governors

Access to the School for Students with Disabilities Statement

This policy reflects the School's continued belief in an open access education as far as can reasonably be expected and in the best interests of the child and with the recognised Safeguarding Procedures within school, including Child Protection and Health and Safety.

Thomas Adams School has high ambitions for all its pupils, including any students with particular physical, learning and emotional needs, thus identifying them as 'disabled' in relation to their peers. (Please see appendix).

Thomas Adams School's commitment to equal opportunities for all students is dictated by the school's inclusive philosophy, and the agreement within our school that every child is important. This commitment is supported by the School's Vision, which is subject to thorough regular review.

A fundamental principle is for all students to have equal opportunities to access a broad and balanced curriculum that takes account of individual needs.

We hope and expect that all our disabled students will participate and achieve in every aspect of school life, given appropriate support and encouragement from all those involved with them.

The Year 6/7 transition process is carefully monitored in order to make sure that:

- All students who will require support in Year 7 have been identified prior to transfer.
- All information regarding the individual student is transferred to establish needs and appropriate strategies.
- All students who require additional visits to familiarise themselves with the school systems of e.g. lesson changeover/moving around the large building/dinner queues, are able to take advantage of individual sessions.
- All students who require specialised intervention are able to meet TAs who will be their Key Workers on entry to Thomas Adams.

The school endeavours to:

- Set suitable learning challenges.
- Respond appropriately to the diverse needs of all students.
- Overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students through regular reviews of school data and personal contact with disabled students and their families.
- Eliminate harassment and promote positive attitudes to disability.

With regard to the wider curriculum, we believe we need to:

- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure access to all physical areas of the school.
- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure access to recreation.
- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure access to educational visits, trips, extra-curricular activities and special events.
- Promote equality of participation.

Thomas Adams aims to identify and remove barriers to disabled students in every area of school life, and to make all young people, and those who support them, valued and welcome.

Admissions to Thomas Adams School for students with disabilities follows DFE Guidance, which states that Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs which name a particular school, will be allocated places.

Regular SEN monitoring acknowledges that students who are identified as having special educational needs/learning difficulties continue to achieve above nationally expected levels.

The nature of the intake at Thomas Adams School and Adams College is contained in the School Evaluation Form (SEF).

In addition:

Thomas Adams regularly reviews Reward and Sanction information for all disabled students in order to:

- Review individual progress.
- Identify areas of success and celebrate achievement.
- Identify areas that require continued or improved support.
- Identify areas that might require input from external agencies.

The School gathers information on participation in extra-curricular and out-of-school activities in order to:

- Identify areas of success and celebrate achievement.
- Review provision.

We continue to review examination entries and results at Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 in order to:

- Review individual progress and set suitable targets for individual academic progression.
- Identify areas of success and celebrate achievement.
- Identify departmental success and strategies which could be developed in different curriculum areas in which disabled students make less progress, using this as information to target support and Continuing Professional Development.

We regularly review attendance statistics for disabled students in order to:

- Target EWO support where applicable.
- Review individual timetables and provision.
- Review curricular provision.

Thomas Adams School regularly reviews its policy and practice on inclusion, and acts on its findings, to increase the range and diversity of the support for disabled students, and to assure they all achieve both their academic targets and their personal goals.

Ongoing consultation includes:

- The views and aspirations of the disabled young people themselves.
- The views and aspirations of their parents/carers.
- The views and aspirations of other disabled people or voluntary organisations.
- The priorities of the Local Authority.

Consultation takes place through:

- Questionnaires.
- Parents' evenings.
- Phone calls.
- Regular student reviews.
- Regular mentoring with students.

and has also included reviews with outside agencies including:

- CAMHS.
- Education Psychologist.
- Education Access Service.
- Looked After Children Team.
- LA Monitoring Officer.
- Safeguarding Team.
- Shropshire's Specific Speech and Language Impaired Children's Team (SSLIC).
- Early Help – via Compass.
- Disabled Children's Team.
- Targeted Youth Service.

Thomas Adams continues to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students at different levels of school life:

- For the individual disabled student.
- In our practices and procedures.
- In our policies.

Reasonable adjustments meet the statutory requirements when they:

- Act to prevent disabled students being placed at a substantial disadvantage.
- Are aimed at all disabled students.
- Are anticipatory.
- Enable students to participate in education and associated services.

When deciding if a reasonable adjustment is necessary to avoid placing students at a substantial disadvantage, we will need to consider the potential impact on disabled students in terms of:

- Time and effort.
- Inconvenience.

The school continually reviews how information is provided to disabled students/parents/carers, and how other methods could improve that delivery through:

- Continued consultation with students/parents/carers.
- Continued liaison with primary schools.
- Continued liaison with outside agencies.

Identifying the appropriate format must take account of:

- Student's impairments: access to information may be improved for particular groups of students by particular approaches, for example: students with learning difficulties may be able to access information more easily where it is provided in simplified language; students with language and communication difficulties may be able to access information more easily where it is provided in picture/symbol systems; students with a visual impairment may be able to access information where it has been pre-recorded onto a CD or pod-cast.
- Preferences expressed by students or parents: consideration of a variety of different formats should be built into the design of information produced for students.

Management, co-ordination and implementation

The governing body, as the responsible body, will continue to take responsibility for:

- Ongoing liaison with the school's leadership team.
- Involvement of a designated governor in target setting and review on a regular basis.

Disability and the Equality Act 2010 – see School’s separate Equality Duty documentation

From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination. It provides legal rights for disabled people in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- access to goods, services and facilities including larger private clubs and land based transport services
- buying and renting land or property
- functions of public bodies, for example the issuing of licences

The Equality Act also provides rights for people not to be directly discriminated against or harassed because they have an association with a disabled person. This can apply to a carer or parent of a disabled person. In addition, people must not be directly discriminated against or harassed because they are wrongly perceived to be disabled.

(More information about the Equality Act, and how you can obtain copies of the Act, can be found on the Government Equalities Office website.)

The definition of ‘disability’ under the Equality Act 2010

In the Act, a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Progressive conditions considered to be a disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairments are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions that are specifically excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

Where to get more guidance on definition of disability

The government has published statutory guidance, to assist adjudicating bodies like courts and tribunals in deciding whether a person is a disabled person. This guidance is called "Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability".

It was published for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act, but continues to apply under the Equality Act 2010, where appropriate.

You can read the current guidance on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) website.