Accessibility Plan

Prepared by	Geoffrey Fowler, Principal, LDE UTC
Team acknowledgements	Ghulam Abbas, Project Manager, LDE UTC
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Accessibility Plan

Policy Statement

London Design and Engineering UTC (LDE UTC) celebrates and values the diversity of its students and employees and is committed to equality of opportunity for all.

Our vision is to create a safe, happy and supportive environment in which each individual student feels valued and respected, where true potential is recognised, high expectations are fulfilled, and personal achievements celebrated.

LDE UTC acknowledges that it has duties under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

In line with these duties and those in the SEN and Disability Act (2001) LDE UTC has developed an accessibility plan which focuses on three aspects:

1. Developing physical access to the site and buildings

2. Developing participation in the curriculum for students with disabilities

3. Improving access to information for parents and students with disabilities

Definition of Disability

The definition of disability under the Act is:

> *"A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial, long-term, adverse effect on day-to-day activities."*

'*Substantial*' is defined as *'more than trivial'* so the definition covers a large group of children and includes hidden disabilities such as dyslexia and other language and learning difficulties and some behavioural difficulties if, for example, they arise from recognised mental health difficulties, such as ADHD. Some, but not all, of the children will have special educational needs.

The aims of the Act and its Code of Practice are to encourage Inclusion. This requires us to think of the barriers each area of disability may cause the individual and to take steps to remove these, or reduce their impact.

The Act sets out areas of everyday activities that people with disabilities may have difficulties with. Our Plan will consider improving access for all these areas over time.

These are:

- Mobility

- Manual dexterity

- Physical co-ordination

- Continence

- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects

- Speech, hearing, eyesight

- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand

- Perception of risk of physical danger

- 10% of children nationally have some degree of dyslexia

- 10% of children nationally have some degree of speech and language difficulty

Developing Access to the Site and Buildings

LDE UTC buildings (both temporary and permanent) have been designed to be fully Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant and accessible to all. For example:

- Lift access to each floor.

- Ramp access, to access the building, and have access to each floor.

- The UTC will have good wheelchair access throughout the building.

- Staff will also be on hand to support mobility needs directly around the UTC.

- Lap trays will be provided for students unable to use desk

However, as and when the needs of individuals are identified as not being fully met we will review our provision and make any reasonable adjustments as may be necessary to ensure equality of access.

Developing participation in the Curriculum

The curriculum has been designed to have learning paths that are appropriate to the needs of all students. The needs of our students will be kept under review by the SENCO and adaptions or support required to ensure equality access will be put in place as appropriate.

Staff will receive ongoing training to ensure they understand and meet the needs of learners with SEND.

Additional equipment that may be needed to support the learning of individuals will be provided by the UTC.

Opportunities to visit or work at employer partner organisations will be planned to ensure that all students can take part and are supported as appropriate.

Access arrangements that meet an individual's needs when undertaking assessments will be applied for and support provided as required.

Access to Information

The LDE UTC will use any appropriate service to ensure that its publications are made available in a variety of formats, as and when required, to be accessible to all users.

Monitoring Evaluation and Review

When the UTC opens in September 2016 the accessibility plan will become an integral part of the UTC's development.

The Plan will be reviewed by the SLT at the end of the first year and look to amend in the light of the experience of the first year of operation. To support this process the LDE will:

- Carry out an audit to identify what is in place and where the gaps are (see Annexes 1 and 2);

- Identify some actions to be taken and write/update the UTC accessibility plan;

- Set some targets for improvement;

- Consult staff, parents/carers and students;

- Publicise the improvements being made;

- Implement actions and evaluate the impact on accessibility;

The Principal will report to the Board of Directors the relevant aspects of the working of the plan as appropriate. The Board of Directors will formally review the plan every three years.

QUESTIONS THAT SENIOR MANAGERS AND OTHERS SHOULD ASK

Improve the physical environment?

- What plans have we already got to decorate or refurbish any part of the UTC building? What should we consider when doing so?

- What particular features would benefit students with different disabilities, e.g. contrasting colours between walls and doors for a visual impairment, flashing lights on fire alarm bells for a hearing impairment, clear signage including pictures as well as text etc.

- Do we have quiet areas, for example for students who are sometimes overwhelmed in the classroom or playground?

- Do we have changing/washing facilities for students who are incontinent?

- Which areas of the UTC are not accessible for students with wheelchairs? What are our priorities in making them more accessible?

- Are the playgrounds and sports facilities accessible? Can we make them more so?

- Are we planning to add new equipment/ICT? What should we consider when doing so?

- Will the new science labs or workshops have adjustable work surfaces?

Increasing access to the curriculum?

- Do all teachers and support staff understand the nature of particular disabilities? Are they able to adapt their teaching to match particular needs, language ability and learning styles? What sort of training is appropriate?

- Are classroom texts/handouts suitable for particular disabilities? Is there a range of reading ages? Is text confusing/too small for some disabilities?

- Are students given copies of notes/details of tasks/homework if they find it difficult to copy off the board?

- Are students given visual material to support language and literacy?

- Would ICT increase access to the curriculum? How should we prioritise its purchase? How should we organise its use?

Improve access to written information?

- What written information do we give to students at the moment? Home/UTC information? Class texts and notes? Notices?

- Is all this information accessible to all our students? How can we make it more so? Do we need any equipment or can we use what we have in a different way?

- What preferences do our students with disabilities, and their parents, have for the way information is given to them?

- Which disabilities might we need to support in the future?

- How might we increase access to the curriculum, the physical environment and access to written information for children with those disabilities?

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Below are questions from the DfE guidance 'Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled students', which suggests asking these questions,

Section 1: How does your school deliver the curriculum?

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled students?		
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled students?		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?		
Are lessons responsive to student diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?		
Are all students encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled students, for example using lip reading?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled students to use equipment in practical work?		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled students who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are UTC visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all students irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Are there high expectations of all students?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		

Section 2: Is your school designed to meet the needs of all students?

Question	Yes	No
Does the size and layout of areas - including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms - allow access for all students?		
Can students, who use wheelchairs, move around the Academy without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		
Are pathways of travel around the Academy site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL students, including students with SEN and disability; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		
Are areas to which students should have access well lit?		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired students such as considering a room's acoustics, noisy equipment?		
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?		

Section 3: How does your school deliver materials in other formats?

Question	Yes	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for students and prospective students who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?		
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		

Some other things to be considered:

- In installing the fire alarm system consider planning for one with flashing lights as well as sound, or a notice that says FIRE BELL IS RINGING in every classroom.

- Consider planning for independent work stations – for children with autism or ADHD – this may be a case of rearranging desks, maybe putting in additional power points one holiday.

- Providing notes for students who cannot copy off the board.

- Training will be a major factor in the Plan – and will underpin need for everyone to make reasonable adjustments to avoid discrimination.