



Brighter Futures
Educational Trust

EQUALITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Policy Number: 49

Review Committee: ELT

Type of Policy: Non- Statutory

Review Period: Annually

Approved: May 2026

Next Review: May 2027



VERSION CONTROL

V1.1	March 2024	Version Control added and Brandles Wheelchair access added.
V1.2	April 2025	Name Change, Simplified and shorted.
V1.3	May 2026	Brand new section 11

CONTENTS

1. Statement of intent
2. Legislative framework
3. Leadership and Governance
4. Disability
5. Sex and gender
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sexual orientation and gender identity
9. Age
10. Accessibility
11. Accessibility plan 2025-2028
12. Complaints and concerns
13. Accessibility-current situation

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Trustees of Brighter Futures Educational Trust (BFET) are committed to fostering a culture of inclusion, equality, and diversity, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation. We believe that all pupils, staff, families, and visitors have the right to be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect. The Trust does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation based on any of the following protected characteristics:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Diversity is celebrated as a strength that enriches the educational experience of our pupils.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This policy complies with the current UK legislation including:

- Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest edition)
- Human Rights Act 1998

3. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring the schools comply with equalities legislation.
- Overseeing the implementation of this policy.
- Monitoring outcomes and the impact of the policy.

Headteachers are responsible for:

- Implementing this policy daily.
- Ensuring staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive appropriate training.

- Taking prompt and appropriate action in cases of discrimination or inequality.

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and inclusion.
- Challenging discrimination and stereotyping.
- Responding to incidents of prejudice or harassment.

4. DISABILITY

Definition

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, S6(1)).

Pupils

The Trust provides specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Pupils may also have co-occurring conditions (e.g., ADHD, autism, sensory impairments). Discrimination based on disability or behaviour related to disability will not be tolerated. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access to learning and activities.

Staff

The Trust does not view disability as a barrier to employment, provided that the duties of the role can be safely and effectively fulfilled. Reasonable adjustments are considered. Physical intervention requirements are based on safety and pupil needs.

Visitors

The Trust endeavours to accommodate all visitors, although some legacy aspects of the site may limit full accessibility. Ramps are in place at key access points. The Trust is committed to making ongoing improvements to physical accessibility wherever possible.

5. SEX AND GENDER

Pupils

The curriculum and all activities are inclusive and accessible to pupils of all genders. Gender stereotypes are actively challenged.

Staff

Recruitment and employment decisions are based on merit, regardless of sex or gender identity.

6. RACE

The Trust affirms its commitment to anti-racism and to creating an environment where racial and cultural diversity is celebrated. Racist behaviour is not tolerated. All incidents are taken seriously, recorded, and reported in accordance with Trust procedures. The curriculum reflects a broad range of cultures and experiences.

7. RELIGION AND BELIEF

The Trust respects the religious beliefs and non-beliefs of all individuals. Pupils and staff are allowed to observe religious practices where feasible. The curriculum includes teaching about the major world religions and promotes respect for diversity.

8. SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity is not tolerated. Staff and pupils are actively supported to express their identities in a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. The curriculum and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education include representation of diverse family structures and relationships.

9. AGE

No staff or volunteers are discriminated against based on age. Employment decisions, including continuation beyond retirement age, are based on ability and the needs of the school.

10. ACCESSIBILITY

While aspects of the current school estate may limit access to some areas, efforts are made to ensure inclusivity. An accessibility plan is in place and reviewed regularly. Improvements are implemented as funding and feasibility allow.

11. ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2025-2028

11.1 Aims

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Trust is committed to improving accessibility across all sites by: Increasing access to the curriculum for pupils with disabilities Improving access to the physical environment Improving the delivery of information to pupils, parents/carers and visitors This plan applies across all Trust sites, including both primary and secondary SEMH provisions.

11.2 Context and current practice

Brighter Futures Educational Trust provides specialist provision for pupils with: Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs Autism (ASD) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Mild learning difficulties The Trust has established inclusive practices across all sites, including: Small class sizes and highly adapted curriculum delivery Use of visual supports (e.g. now/next boards, structured routines) Sensory spaces available at all sites Embedded therapeutic support Input from external professionals where specified in EHCPs Communication is adapted to ensure accessibility through: Simplified written communication and follow-up phone calls Use of visuals and symbols Support for parents/carers with low literacy

11.3 Accessibility audit summary

The Trust operates across multiple sites with varying levels of accessibility. Across sites: Buildings include a combination of ramps and stairs Some areas are not fully accessible to wheelchair users Environmental adaptations are in place but vary between sites Identified areas for development include: Limited wheelchair access in some areas due to site constraints Inconsistent use of visual supports across classes Staff training gaps in inclusive and adaptive practice Physical limitations due to the design of existing buildings

11.4 Management, coordination and implementation

The Trust will ensure: The Accessibility Plan is implemented across all sites Leaders monitor progress against actions Staff receive appropriate training and support External agencies are engaged where appropriate Responsibility for implementation sits with Trust Leaders, Headteachers and SENCOs.

11.5 action plan

A. Increasing Access to the Curriculum

Target	Strategy / Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Ensure consistent use of visual supports across all classes	Develop and implement Trust-wide expectations for visuals (e.g. now/next, visual timetables)	2025-2026	SLT / SENCO	Consistency observed in learning walks
Improve staff expertise in adaptive teaching for SEMH/ASD/ADHD	Deliver targeted CPD and coaching for staff	Ongoing	SLT	Improved quality of teaching and engagement
Ensure EHCP provision is consistently implemented	Regular review of EHCP strategies and classroom practice	Ongoing	SENCO	Provision evident in classrooms and reviews

B. Improving Access to the Physical Environment

Target	Strategy / Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Review accessibility across all Trust sites	Annual site audits to identify barriers and priorities	Annual	SLT / Premises	Identified improvements actioned where feasible
Increase wheelchair accessibility where possible	Make reasonable adjustments within site constraints (e.g. ramps, room allocation)	2025-2028	Trust / Premises	Increased access to key areas across sites

C. Improving Access to Information

Target	Strategy / Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Ensure all communication is accessible to families	Use simplified language, follow-up calls and adapted formats	Ongoing	Admin / SLT	Improved parental understanding and engagement
Embed use of visuals and symbols in communication	Develop consistent approaches across Trust	2025-2026	SLT	Visual communication evident across settings

11.6 MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Accessibility Plan will be reviewed annually and updated every three years in line with statutory requirements. Progress will be monitored by Trust leaders and reported to Trustees. The plan will also be reviewed alongside the School Improvement Plan to ensure alignment with Trust priorities

12. COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Any concerns or complaints relating to equality or accessibility should be raised with the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees and will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's complaints procedure. Complaints are treated seriously and addressed promptly in accordance with the Trust's policies.

13. ACCESSIBILITY-CURRENT SITUATION

As things stand, there are no pupils with physical disabilities that require wheelchair use attending Larwood and Brandles Schools. However, the accessibility of each school site varies and is described below. Larwood School Beech Road has complete wheelchair accessibility. An audit and review will be undertaken if future need arises.

Larwood School Stevenage:

Areas with wheelchair access:

- Main reception (ground floor)

- Ground floor classrooms (though door widths may limit access)
- Space Hub area
- The Play barn (with ramp access)
- Outside play areas (subject to weather conditions)
- The 'top end' of the school via a separate entrance (limited to the dining hall)

Areas without wheelchair access:

- Conference room and second floor (only accessible via stairs)
- Movement from the main hall to the dining room/top end (four steps)
- Areas where door widths are not suitable for wheelchairs

Brandles School:

Areas with wheelchair access:

- All classrooms in the main building
- Hall and canteen
- Staff room
- All toilets in the main building
- New build classrooms
- The Hive
- Multi-gym
- Science lab
- Art room
- Disabled toilet
- Outside play areas (subject to weather conditions)
- Outside football gym

This policy replaces all previous Equalities and Accessibility Policies and reflects the current requirements of UK legislation.