

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable Adjustments

Schools and education authorities have had a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils since 2002: originally, under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA 1995); and, from October 2010, under the Equality Act 2010.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires a school to take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils.

A school's duty to make reasonable adjustments is an anticipatory one owed to disabled pupils generally, and therefore schools need to think in advance about what disabled pupils might require and what adjustments might need to be made for them.

Most reasonable adjustments might be changes to policies and practices which are inexpensive and will often involve a change in practice rather than the provision of expensive pieces of equipment or additional staff. They may take time to plan.

It is good practice to involve parents and pupils in planning and agreeing reasonable adjustments.

The duty applies to all aspects of learning including class and homework, school trips, procedures, services (including the use of a TA), auxiliary aids (like a manual step or a digital aid), policies (including a behavioural policy) and exclusions.

The reasonable adjustments duty is a continuing duty. This means that adjustments need to be kept under reviewed and may need changing over time.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

- On a residential trip a pupil with sensory needs can take meals in a separate room with a small group of friends rather than in the large busy cafeteria.
- A secondary school organises for a subject usually taught upstairs to be taught on the ground floor to enable access for a pupil in a wheelchair
- A student with medical needs can take an exam at home or have a delayed start.
- A pupil with chronic fatigue is given a 'buddy' to carry schoolbooks and the school policy adjusted so that she will not be penalised for arriving late.

Further Reading:

