

The Reasonable Adjustments Duty

Where something a nursery, school or college does might put a disabled child at a **substantial disadvantage** compared with other children who are not disabled, they **must** take reasonable steps to avoid this disadvantage.

This is usually referred to as the **reasonable adjustments duty**.

The duty is **anticipatory**. This means that nurseries, schools and colleges need to think ahead to anticipate where a pupil may experience disadvantage and put adjustments in place to stop this happening.


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.

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

Sometimes settings may need to call on specialist advice, but most reasonable adjustments might be changes to policies and practices which may cost very little or nothing. They may take time to plan.

Nurseries and post 16 settings must make reasonable adjustments to their environment.



Schools are not required to make physical alterations, but they must publish accessibility plans explaining how they plan to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information.

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

The Equality and Humans Rights Commission Reasonable Adjustments Guidance for Schools offers a detailed explanation and lots of examples of reasonable adjustments:

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/reasonable_adjustments_for_disabled_pupils_1.pdf