

Adjustments in Education



Under the Equality Act 2010 education settings like schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments'. This is so that all pupils can join in with all the activities and services provided. It is also to help all pupils to have as much chance as others at being happy and successful in education.

Education settings include nurseries, schools, sixth forms and colleges.

In this article we will look at what reasonable adjustment means. We will also look at what reasonable adjustments can be made for pupils depending on their need.

What is reasonable?

An example of a reasonable adjustment might be arranging for a student who uses a wheelchair or has a physical difficulty to have classes on the ground floor of the building. Another example is that a teacher faces a hearing impaired student to enable them to lip-read.

These adjustments may already be provided for in a child's Education, Health & Care plan (EHCP). In the case that they are not, or the pupil does not have an EHCP, the education setting or Local Authority still has a duty to provide them.

The law says that education settings must provide auxiliary aids or services. This means extra resources to help pupils. Examples of an auxiliary aid or service could be producing documents in Braille.

It is not guaranteed that an auxiliary aid or service will be provided by the Local Authority or education setting. The law only says that they must decide whether or not it is 'reasonable' for them to provide it.

They may decide if it's reasonable by thinking about:

- How much money the education setting has
- How much the extra help will cost
- How effective or useful the aid or service will be
- If the aid may help other pupils
- Health and safety requirements
- Provision already made by the SEN Framework

What can reasonable adjustments be?

Here are some examples of reasonable adjustments depending on need.

Sensory Needs:

- Wear cotton clothes if allergic to synthetic materials
- Be taught in multi-sensory ways
- Have practical equipment to support learning, such as Numicon
- Provide ear defenders
- Use of a quiet area or sensory room
- Use of a fiddle toy
- Regular breaks
- Using different ways to record work, such as writing, drawing, typing, speaking or using technology



Communication Needs:

- Provide a visual timetable and / or a personal visual timetable
- Use labels and signs around school
- Provide an individual area to work or rest in
- Use consistent images for communication
- Create personalised social stories
- Allow extra time for thinking and responding
- Break up information into smaller chunks
- Use visual task plans



Specific learning difficulties / Dyslexia:

- Provide a coloured overlay
- Provide visual and memory aids
- Break up information into small chunks
- Provide technology such as a computer or use of interactive software
- Use of pre-teaching or intervention groups

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):

- Have regular breaks from working to rest or move around
- Break tasks up into smaller parts
- Build in time for physical play, games such as sensory circuits
- Allow fiddle toys
- Staff complete training on ADHD



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Physical disability needs:

- Provide adapted eating support such as plates with raised rims
- Adjustable desk height
- Space to move around classroom and access all areas
- Use lap trays or slanted boards
- Use of technology, such as a tablet
- Use of ramps
- Provision of quiet space if tired and need to rest

Hearing impairment needs:

- Sit pupil near to teacher
- Sit pupil with a good view of teacher and peers for lip reading
- Reduce classroom noise by using carpets
- Provide hearing loops
- Use of visual aids
- Allow extra thinking and responding time
- Provide personal instructions (written or visual)

Visual impairment needs:

- Clear and consistent pathways
- Use of practical and tactile resources
- Ensure pupil's work area is well lit
- Provide technology such as a computer, e-books or read aloud
- Use high contrast such as very dark text on light background
- Project teaching screen onto pupil's personal screen



What do reasonable adjustments look like?

Reasonable adjustments can be very small changes that make a big difference. Often these adjustments will also support other pupils in the class.

Here are some examples of what reasonable adjustments might look like in education settings.

A child with cerebral palsy has got a place at school with two floors. Their classroom is upstairs. The reasonable adjustment their school can make is to move their classroom downstairs so that they do not become over-tired.

A young person with a visual impairment finds it hard to read handouts provided by college. The reasonable

adjustments the college can make are to provide them in large print or to provide an audio version.

A child on the autism spectrum goes to a primary school. They find it very difficult to concentrate for long and becomes upset when they don't know what will happen that day. The reasonable adjustments the school can make are to use a visual timetable. The school can also break down their work into small sections and provide them with regular breaks. They can also set up their own workstation or quiet area for when they need it.

A disabled pupil needs help with toileting, washing and dressing. They are supported during the school day by a learning support assistant. This extra staff member is provided through their EHC plan. The school arranges a residential school trip for their year group. The pupil wants to go but can't until their needs are met. The reasonable adjustments the school can make are to ask the member of staff to go. If this isn't possible the school could ask social services for help, or ask the family if they can provide overnight support.

What if I think the education setting is not providing reasonable adjustments?

If you have any questions or worries about reasonable adjustments for your child talk to their teacher or SENCo first. <https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/education-learning/disability-discrimination-in-school/>

Find out more

Here are some websites with more information:

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/children/my-childs-education/reasonable-adjustments-in-education>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/reasonable-adjustments-college-university/>

<https://www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/education-rights>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

Find Wakefield's Accessibility Strategy and helpful downloads, including a School Accessibility Checklist, here: <http://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pageId=5000>

You can also contact Barnardo's WESAIL wesail@barnardosorg.uk