

Field Studies Council Inclusivity & Accessibility Policy and Standards for Educational Activities

Introduction

Field Studies Council is committed to ensuring that all learners, staff, and visitors can meaningfully participate in its educational activities. This policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010¹. It will be reviewed every year, or as required by legislation changes.

This policy aims to:

1. Promote equitable participation
2. Help identify and remove barriers
3. Proactively deliver reasonable adjustments²
4. Improve digital and physical accessibility for all users

The policy follows the principle of inclusive practice around universal design³ which is “*the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability*”⁴.

We will always do our best to adhere to the standards set out in this policy and support our visitors and guests, however due to the nature of our buildings, location of some field sites, accessibility restrictions and other factors this may not always be possible.

How can you help?

Visitors and guests can help us by informing us of any specific needs or requirements well in advance of your visit. The earlier you let us know, the more likely we will be able to accommodate specific needs or requirements.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reasonable-adjustments-a-legal-duty/reasonable-adjustments-a-legal-duty>

³ <https://accessibility.education.gov.uk/guidelines>

⁴ <https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design>

1. Accessibility Standards

This includes:

- Accessible facilities.
- Fieldwork and Field site considerations.
- Adapted equipment.
- Integrated accessibility within risk assessments.

We will:

1. Provide accessible classrooms, entrances, accommodation and toilets at our Field Centres (locations managed by Field Studies Council), which are regularly audited and improved.
2. Provide quiet spaces at our Field Centres, wherever possible, for individuals with sensory needs and for anyone who wishes to use a dedicated space for prayer.
3. Provide single occupancy toilets and bedrooms on request, where available, to meet an individual's needs.
4. Support transgender and non-binary guests so they are comfortable with bedroom and bathroom facilities, whilst adhering to legal guidance. For example, allowing bedrooms and toilets to be shared based on gender where this aligns with the visiting groups own policies.
5. Plan outdoor learning to include accessible paths or alternative routes/activities where fieldwork locations allow.
6. Ensure consideration is given to availability of accessible and gender-neutral bathroom facilities during time away from the centre.
7. Ensure accessibility considerations are integrated into the selection of study locations and risk assessments for all activities.

2. Inclusive Educational Delivery

This includes:

- Inclusive teaching strategies inc. communication styles & route choices during activities
- Flexible participation.
- Reasonable adjustments.

We will:

1. Utilise inclusive materials and pedagogy to support learners needs
2. Provide flexible participation options where possible (e.g., alternative tasks, observation roles, modified data collection).

3. Continuously improve our teaching materials in line with cognitive accessibility guidelines.
4. Make reasonable adjustments, for example:
 - Modified pacing or breaks
 - Adapted routes to activity sites
 - Role adjustments for students during group activities (e.g., team-based data collection).

3. Digital Accessibility Standards

Our educational resources include:

- Compliance or working towards Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA for our web content.⁵
- Accessible digital educational materials.
- Use inclusive imagery that represents diverse communities.
- Published accessibility statements.

4. Pre- and Post-Visit Communication and Support

We will:

1. Provide clear, pre-visit accessibility information, including access, facilities, physical demands, and available adjustments.
2. Offer accessible formats on request (large print, high contrast alternatives, digital formats).
3. Ensure multiple communication channels are available (email, phone, written) for discussing access needs.

5. Staff Training & Competence

We will:

- Provide 'EDI awareness training' for all staff.
- Ensure our staff support and respect learner needs, for example including using affirmative language for transgender and non-binary visitors and adjusting activities for religious preferences
- Work towards increasing staff awareness and confidence in commonly used assistive tools. Our staff will support the use of school-provided assistive technologies (e.g. hearing loops, AAC devices, screen readers).

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag>

- Train all catering staff in allergy awareness and cater to a wide range of dietary requirements, including religious requirements and safe foods for individuals who would otherwise not eat the planned meal. When requested in advance, food can also be provided at alternative times to support religious practices (e.g., during Ramadan).

Monitoring & Review

This policy is owned by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.

We commit to continuously improve our provision by:

- Conducting annual reviews of accessibility compliance and learner feedback.
- Auditing digital content regularly, mirroring accessibility audit guidance used in UK public sector services.
- Documenting and recording requests for access needs, adjustments, and identified barriers.
- Implementing changes from updated Policy that feed into organisational planning.
- Appointing designated staff who will oversee compliance and coordinate improvements consistent with UK regulatory approach.