



2016

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



This plan shows how our School intends, over time, to increase the accessibility of our school for disabled pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors.

Accessibility Plan 2016 – 2019

We want all children to enjoy school, to be challenged and to achieve their very best. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter.

Purpose of Plan

This plan shows how we intend, over time, to increase the accessibility of our school for disabled pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors.

Definition of disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Our school recognises its duty;

- not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- to publish an Accessibility Plan.

The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Drawing up an Action Plan

Schools and LAs need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. These are the same duties as previously existed under the Disability Discrimination Act and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010. Accessibility plans in schools are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can **participate in the curriculum**;
- Improving the **physical environment** of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- Improving the availability of **accessible information** to disabled pupils.

Purpose of Plan

- This plan shows how our School intends, over time, to increase the accessibility of our school for disabled pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors.

The 3 areas to be considered in this action plan are:

a) Improving Education & related activities

The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of Local Authority services, such as the EPSS Service specialist teachers and Educational Psychologist, SEND advisers, and support commissioned from the Complex Needs School’s SEN Trust and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

b) Improving the Physical environment

The school will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings.

c) Improving the Provision of information

The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the Local Authority, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

Signed on behalf of staff Date:

Signed on behalf of Governing Body Date:

	Targets	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Goals Achieved
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<u>Short Term</u>	Ensure all staff are aware of disabled children's curriculum access	Set up a system of individual access plans for disabled pupils when required Information sharing with all agencies involved with child	All staff aware of individual children's needs.	As required	The school reacts to the needs of both adults and children so that the curriculum is accessible.
	Availability of written material in alternative formats	The school will make itself aware of the services available through the LA for converting written information into alternative formats.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes Review all current school publications and promote the availability in different formats for those that require it	Ongoing	Delivery of information to disabled pupils improved
	Ensure the curriculum can be accessed by all children	Check timetables and resources are not a barrier to any individual or group's access to the curriculum.	All children access all aspects of the curriculum.	As required	Delivery of school information to parents and the local community improved
	Review documentation with a view of ensuring accessibility for pupils with visual impairment Any redecorating work within the school is sympathetic to the visually impaired	Get advice from Hearing and Vision Support Service on alternative formats and use of IT software to produce customized materials. Advice taken re-lighting and colour schemes before any further decorating takes place.	All school information available for all The school decorates in a way that is sympathetic to the VI.	As required	Delivery of school information to pupils & parents with visual difficulties improved.

	Targets	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Goals Achieved
<u>Medium Term</u>	Increase confidence of all staff in differentiating the curriculum	Undertake an audit of staff training requirements Be aware of staff training needs on curriculum access Assign CPD for dyslexia, differentiation and recording methods	All teachers are able to more fully meet the requirements of disabled children's needs with regards to accessing the curriculum	On-going and as required	Increase in access to the National Curriculum
	Ensure classroom support staff have specific training on disability issues	Be aware of staff training needs Staff access appropriate CPD	Raised staff confidence in strategies for differentiation and increased pupil participation	On-going and as required	Increase in access to the National Curriculum
	Classrooms are optimally organised to promote the participation and independence of all pupils	Review and implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process in individual class bases	Raised staff confidence and increased pupil participation	As required	Increase in access to the National Curriculum
	Use ICT software to support learning	Make sure software installed where needed	Lessons start on time without the need to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of individual pupils Wider use of SEN resources in classrooms	From Sept. 2016	Increase in access to the National Curriculum
	All educational visits to be accessible to all	Develop guidance for staff on making trips accessible Ensure each new venue is vetted for appropriateness	All pupils in school able to access all educational visits where this can be reasonable achieved and take part in a range of activities	Ongoing	

	Review PE curriculum to ensure PE accessible to all	Gather information on accessible PE and disability sports Seek disabled sports people to come into school	All to have access to PE and be able to excel		
	To ensure the school develops children's awareness of disability.	Ensure there are some learning resources (books etc.) that show positive examples of people with disabilities in a positive light. Invite people with disabilities into school as appropriate. Use opportunities to show people with disabilities in a positive light:	When needed, the school provides written materials in alternative formats.		

	Targets	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Goals Achieved
<u>Long Term</u>	Any future plans for further development of the building continue to take the needs of disabled pupils, parents and visitors into account.	Work with LA and architects when planning modernisations.	Where it can be reasonably achieved, the school building continues to be accessible for all.	Ongoing	The school is prepared for the needs of both adults and children so that the building is accessible.

Appendix A

Schools previously had a statutory duty which required them to take proactive steps to tackle disability discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity for disabled pupils. Under the Equality Act 2010, this has been replaced by the general equality duty and the new specific duties. This article aims to provide an update on guidance related only to disability, although the equality duty now includes all those with protected characteristics, which makes it unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their:

- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity

General equality duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The duty to have “due regard” to equality considerations means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, thought must be given to the equality implications. The guidance suggests that it is good practice for schools to keep a note of any equality consideration, and that publishing it will help to demonstrate that the due regard duty is being fulfilled.

Eliminating discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act

Evidence that the school is aware of the requirements of the Act and is complying with the duties may include:

- Copies of policies (for example, the behaviour policy, child protection policy, curriculum policy) where included information has been effective in increasing schools ability to eliminate discrimination, reduce bullying etc.
- Awareness raising sessions with Governors, staff and pupils and the impact of these.
- Information on the action the school has taken to reduce discrimination such as responding to feedback from parents and pupils.
- Impact of aspects included within the curriculum aimed at eliminating discrimination and samples of work produced e.g. photographs of displays.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Evidence of compliance with this aspect might include:

- Recording of feedback from pupils/parents on action taken to reduce gaps in attainment between diverse cohorts of pupils e.g. providing social skills support or a sanctuary for those with autistic spectrum disorders

- Evaluation of action taken by the school to remove/minimise disadvantages experienced by disabled pupils e.g. additional support evidenced through TAs timetables, increased use of IT to reduce reliance on reading text etc.
- Steps to meet the particular needs of those with a disability through reasonable adjustments evidenced through teachers planning.
- Accessibility plans aimed at increasing active participation.

Fostering good relations across all characteristics

The evidence that schools might use to demonstrate this might include:

- Identifying and evaluating the impact of curriculum content that aims to promote tolerance and friendship and develop understanding of different disabilities. T
- Recording of activities (school/class organisation for instance) that aims to reduce prejudice and increasing relationships between diverse pupil groups
- Impact of increased involvement with local communities/ partnerships with other schools that is aimed at increasing empathy between different groups of pupils

Specific duties

The new specific regulations require schools:

- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the new PSED, and
- To prepare and publish equality objectives.
- Schools have until 6 April 2012 to publish their initial information and first set of objectives. These will relate to all the protected characteristics and not just to disability. Schools will then need to update the published information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years.

In addition to its inclusion within the PSED equality objectives, schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability. The DfE non-statutory guidance states that this duty can be summarised as follows:

- Where something a disabled pupil is placed at a disadvantage compared to other pupils then the school must take reasonable adjustments to try and reduce/remove the disadvantage.
- Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled pupils.
- Schools are not subject to the other reasonable adjustment duty to make alterations to physical features because this is already considered as part of their planning duties.

Reasonable adjustments

Factors a school may consider when assessing the reasonableness of an adjustment, may include the financial or other resources required for the adjustment, its effectiveness, its effect on other pupils, health and safety requirements and whether aids have been made available through the Special Educational Needs route. Cost will play a major part in determining what is reasonable. For example, a small rural primary school may not be able to provide specialised IT equipment for any disabled pupils who may need it and it may not be reasonable for the school to provide that equipment. On the other hand, a much larger school might reasonably be expected to provide it. (A DfE consultation is taking place on this aspect at present)

The guidance states that many pupils with a disability will have an SEN statement and auxiliary aids provided by the LA and so may not require anything further. However, if the disabled pupil does not have a statement (or the statement doesn't provide the necessary aid) then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will fall to the school (after the relevant provisions come into force). The reasonable adjustments duties on schools are intended to

complement the accessibility planning duties and the existing SEN statement provisions which are part of education legislation, under which Local Authorities have a duty to provide auxiliary aids to pupils with a statement of special educational need. In addition to the duty to consider reasonable adjustments for particular individual disabled pupils, schools will also have to consider potential adjustments which may be needed for disabled pupils generally.

Accessibility planning

Schools and LAs need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. These are the same duties as previously existed under the Disability Discrimination Act and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010. Accessibility plans in schools are aimed at:

Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;

Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and

Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Schools will also need to have regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must regularly review them. An accessibility plan may be a freestanding document but may also be published as part of another document such as the school development plan. Under the new specific duties, there are no longer requirements to create equality schemes, but schools may choose to continue producing such a scheme, if it helps them to comply with the Equality Duty, and they can expand it to cover the additional protected characteristics.

Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum

The curriculum covers teaching and learning and wider provision embracing after school clubs; leisure, sporting and cultural activities; and school trips. Planning for improved access to the curriculum includes consideration of school and classroom organisation and support, timetabling, curriculum options, deployment of staff and staff information and training. Curriculum audits can support the school to review patterns of achievement and participation by disabled pupils in different areas of the curriculum, e.g. the inclusion of physically disabled children in PE, and then to identify action to increase participation.

Improving the physical environment of schools

This strand of the planning duty covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. The physical environment includes steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, heating, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs, interior surfaces, room decor and furniture. Improvements to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops, communication aids, well designed (passive) room acoustics and way-finding systems. The provision of 'quiet' areas and improvements to the physical safety of the environment, indoors and outdoors, may also enhance access for children with learning disabilities. Improved access in existing buildings can often be achieved by rearranging room space, removing obstructions from walkways, changing the layout of classrooms, providing designated storage space or reallocating rooms to particular subject specialisms.

Physical aids to access education cover ICT equipment, desks, chairs, writing equipment, science equipment and the like. E.g. through enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept keyboards, communication aids, switches, photocopying enlargement facilities, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor co-ordination and poor hand/eye skills such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils.

Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

This part of the duty covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its pupils – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to those with a disability (including those with significant low reading acquisition levels) . This might include alternative formats such as large print, the use of ICT and the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or in sign language. The information should take account of pupils' disabilities and views expressed by pupils or their parents about their preferred means of communication. The school should consider how all information normally provided in a written format including work sheets, timetables, school examination papers, newsletters, information about school events, trips and extracurricular provision could be made accessible to all those with a disability.

Conclusion

In regards to disability, schools need to:

Identify where evidence of equality considerations is located within schools policies and practices.

- Carry out accessibility audits to identify potential barriers to access in the three areas of school life identified above and produce an action plan to ensure improvements
- Provide appropriate training for staff, governors and pupils
- Review and improve the school's arrangements through actions identified within the accessibility plan

References

The Equality Act 2010: Advice for school leaders, school staff, Governing bodies and local authorities
<http://preview.tinyurl.com/5wpx9aa>

Equality Act Guidance downloads from the Equality and Human Rights Commission – includes *Guidance for education providers – what the equality law means for you as an education provider*
<http://preview.tinyurl.com/3md47tk>