

# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Status: statutory

## Legislative background

The Equality Act 2010 states that 'schools cannot lawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation'. In order to meet this requirement in the context of disability, the Act states that all schools must have an accessibility plan. They must also ensure that they are meeting their accessibility duties under the public sector equality duty and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2014. An accessibility plan is listed as a statutory document by the DFE in its latest guidance on mandatory policies for schools and academy trusts, issued in September 2019 and updated on 27 January 2020.

This guidance should be read alongside CEFM policies on Equality, SEN and disabilities, Teaching learning and assessment and Behaviour.

## Nature of accessibility plans

The plan must show the current accessibility of all areas of the site and how future access will be improved for students, staff and visitors with disabilities. It should also demonstrate how far the school curriculum is available to all students/students irrespective of aptitude or disability. Where disabled students are placed at a substantial disadvantage in either respect, schools must consider whether any reasonable adjustment can be made to overcome that disadvantage. This must be done within a reasonable time frame and in ways that are determined after taking account of the student's disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

The DFE's statutory advice 2014 states that a school's accessibility plan should reflect its intention in three areas in order to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided by the school.
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

These three tenets form the overarching framework of any accessibility plan.

The law requires that the plan is reported on annually and reviewed every three years. The governing body is free to delegate approval to a committee, an individual governor, or to the headteacher.

The plan may be published as a freestanding document or as part of another document, such as the school development plan or an equality and diversity plan. It must, however, be made available to parents and the community in whatever the chosen format by publication on the school's website.

## Implementation of the plan

Key starting points should be assessments of:

- The nature of the school population to whom the plan will apply.
- The nature of the school – its size, its plans and priorities, its physical structure and environment.
- The students already in school.

- The nature of the future intake.
- The level of staff awareness of equalities legislation.
- The presence of disabled students/students and their participation in the life of the school.
- The impact on disabled students'/students on the way in which the school is organised – for example, timetabling, school policies and practices around the administration of medicines, access to teaching and learning, school trips etc.

### **Involvement of disabled students/staff**

The plan should be informed by:

- The views and aspirations of disabled students themselves.
- The views and aspirations of their families.
- The view of other people and organisations associated with disability.
- The priorities of the local authority (LA).

Because every school site and layout is different and the numbers and needs of disabled students can vary considerably from school to school, it is not entirely possible to produce a detailed model plan that would suit every setting – any access plan will of necessity be very specific. Instead, the policy below includes the items which should appear in any plan, followed by a series of suggested headings which can be modified, amended to suit the circumstances of any school.

# **Accessibility Plan for Elthorne Park High School**

## **Aims of the plan**

The purpose of this plan is to show how our school intends, over time, to continue to increase accessibility to the curriculum, the physical environment and written information, so that all students/students with a disability can take full advantage of their education and associated opportunities in the school community.

We are determined that all students will have access to appropriate qualifications and will develop the skills and resilience to meet the demands of adult life. Students will demonstrate the empathy and confidence to work with others to achieve a better future.

## **Objectives of the plan**

- To ensure all disabled students are fully involved in school life and are making good progress.
- To identify barriers to participation and find practical solutions to overcoming these.
- To work with disabled students and their parents or carers to create appropriate provision, including education health and care plans where relevant.
- To increase the confidence, sensitivity and expertise of staff when teaching or supporting a wide range of disabled students/students.
- To meet the requirements of the Equality Act and the SEND code of practice in respect of disabled students.
- To reduce or eliminate where possible the barriers to adults with a disability, be they staff, parents, carers, governors or other users, to ensure their full potential in the life of the school and enable full use of the facilities available.

## **The Equality Act 2010**

Compliance with the Equality Act is consistent with our school aims and equal opportunities policy as well as our SEND policy.

The governing body has full regard to the Equality Act 2010 when carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

All those who work in the school as employees or volunteers recognise their duty under the Equality Act 2010:

- Not to discriminate against disabled students in admissions or exclusions, or in the provision of education and associated services.
- Not to treat disabled students less favourably.
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage.
- To publish an accessibility plan.

## **Key staff and governors**

- The member of the senior leadership team with oversight of special educational needs and disabilities is Katy Reeves

- The lead member of staff is the SEND co-ordinator Katy Reeves who is responsible for
  - The special needs register.
  - The welfare of all SEN and disabled students/students.
  - Appropriate training for staff.
  - Ensuring that the accessibility plan is implemented.
  - Monitoring its effectiveness in meeting disabled students' needs.
- Each year group has a named member of staff whose particular responsibility is SEND.
- All teaching and support staff involved in the teaching and learning of SEND students receive regular specialist training as part of our CPD programme.
- A named governor (Nick Armstrong) is responsible for ensuring that the governing body has a termly update on SEND students at a full GB meeting and an annual report on the improvements achieved for disabled students under the accessibility plan.

## **Our plan is based on the three main tenets of the DFE statutory advice 2014**

### **Increased access to the curriculum**

Ideally, all areas of the curriculum should be available to all students/students, regardless of their disability. We make every effort to educate students with disabilities alongside their peers in a mainstream classroom setting. Where this is not possible the SEND co-ordinator consults with the student and their parents about proposed flexible alternative arrangements.

The school curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it is accessible to students of all levels and abilities and supports the learning and progress of all students as individuals. This includes learning outside the classroom through activities such as after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities and school visits.

Areas on which we intend to concentrate in 3 years include:

- Better early identification of the needs of disabled students/students and staff awareness of these.
- Regular training of staff on aspects of SEN and disability in the school and developing appropriate teaching and learning strategies.
- Specific specialist intervention where needed for all SEND students.
- Special access arrangements for internal/external exams.

### **Improved access to the physical environment of the school**

The school carries out an accessibility audit every three years in advance of reviewing this policy. The audit is carried out by the governors' Resources committee as part of our regular safeguarding tours of the school.

Teachers are given advice on how to move and arrange furniture and how to manage lighting, noise and visual stimulus, etc. We also give attention to how students/students' needs can be met on school journeys and visits.

Areas on which we intend to concentrate in 3 years include:

- Improved toilets
- Improved access for Sixth Form study areas

### **Improved delivery of information to disabled student/students**

Teachers and TAs consider the needs of each disabled student/student and provide accessible learning resources for them. The increased use of interactive whiteboards and other digital technology have diversified the ways in which all students/ students received information.

Areas on which we intend to concentrate in 3 years include:

- Raising awareness of font sizes and page layout for students with visual impairments.
- Readers and scribes in examinations.
- Coloured overlays for texts.
- Auditing the school library to ensure the availability of large font and audio books.
- Auditing signage around the school.
- Additional tactile resources.

### **Adult users**

Many of these improvements will also benefit disabled adults working at or associated with the school as well disabled family members of students, staff and governors. They will also enable more disabled adults to have access to the school premises through wider use.

### **Review**

The accessibility plan has the status of a policy of the governing body and must be reviewed every three years. The views of disabled students and adults will feed into the review.

Next review due: 2024