Accessibility Policy and Plan
May 2017

Priestlands School, Lymington
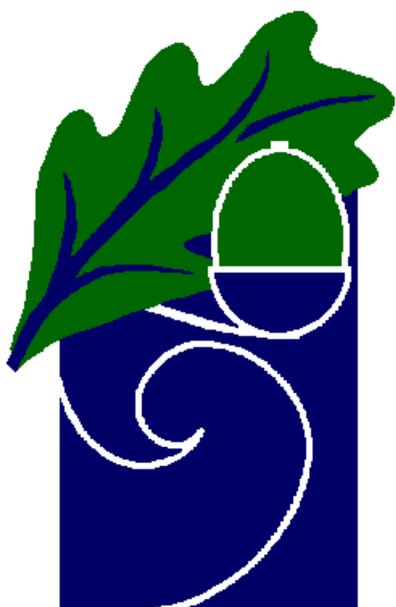
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1 Overview

1.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, all schools should have an Accessibility Plan. The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act. The effect of the law is the same as in the past, meaning that "schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against students because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation".

1.2 According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if:

(a) He or she has a physical or mental impairment; and

(b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

1.3 The Accessibility Plan is listed as a statutory document of the Department for Education's guidance on statutory policies for schools. The Plan must be reviewed every three years and approved by the Board of Governors. The review process can be delegated to a committee of the Board of Governors, an individual governor or the Headteacher.

1.4 Governors and staff believe that compliance with The Equality Act is consistent with the school's aims and equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the school's SEN policy. Furthermore, in performing their duties, governors and staff will have regard to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Code of Practice (2002);

1.5 Governors and staff recognise their duty under The Equality Act to ensure that the provision of education (not only teaching and learning, but also the wider life of the school – admissions and exclusions; school clubs and activities; break and lunch times; school sports; school policies; interaction with peers; assessment and exam arrangements; and preparation of students for the next phase of education):

- does not discriminate against disabled students;
- does not to treat disabled students less favourably;
- takes reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage.

1.6 The school recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

1.7 The school provides all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students. This underpins the development of a more inclusive curriculum:

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

2 Objectives

2.1 To increase the extent to which disabled students can access the school curriculum.

2.2 To improve the school's physical environment to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and participate as members of the school community.

2.3 To improve communication with parents and the wider community about the school's approach to accessibility and accessibility planning.

2.4 To publish an Accessibility Action Plan.

3   Education and related activities

3.1   The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA and other services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEN inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

3.2   Given that many barriers to curriculum access will be similar for many groups of children, curriculum access will be considered at "whole school" level.

3.3   Teachers will use a variety of approaches in planning and delivering the curriculum to draw on the different strengths and aptitudes of students. These will include using flexible grouping arrangements including ones where students with disabilities can work with their peers, and encouraging peer support, e.g. setting up buddying or mentoring arrangements. Staff at all levels will be encouraged to audit practice by identifying barriers to curriculum access (Appendix 2).

3.4   Staff training needs will be considered to support training and development and to facilitate the teaching and support of disabled children.

4   Physical environment

4.1   The school will take account of the needs of students and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises.

4.2   However, with regret, the school accepts that the school site is not wheelchair-friendly and that the Local Authority has identified and resourced other local schools to enable them to cater for the needs of students who need wheelchairs. We accept that we are unlikely to be similarly resourced in the current funding climate unless a number of physically impaired students are identified as living in the school's catchment area. Nonetheless, the school also recognises the absence of physically impaired students does not mean that there will not be parents or carers needing an accessible site.

4.3   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, signs, interior surfaces, floor coverings, room décor and furniture. Improvements to physical access might include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops, well designed room acoustics and way-finding systems.

4.4   Physical aids to access education might include ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept key boards, switches, photocopying enlargement facilities, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids (such as such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils) for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills.

4.5   Improved access to the physical environment can be achieved by rearranging room space; removing obstructions from walkways; changing the layout of classrooms; designated storage space; or by reallocating rooms to particular subject specialisms.

5   Communication and provision of information

5.1   The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the Local Authority and voluntary sector, for providing information (such as worksheets, timetables, examination papers, newsletters, and information about events, trips and extra-curricular provision) in alternative formats when required or requested.

5.2   Alternative formats include large print, audiotape and Braille or oral provision of information through lip speaking or in sign language.

6 Progress

6.1 The school will publish an Action Plan (Appendix 1) and incorporate into its annual SEN report information about accessibility and accessibility planning.

7 Evaluation and Success Criteria

7.1 The success of this Accessibility Plan will be measured by the following:

- satisfaction levels of disabled students and their parents with the provision made for them and their participation in the life of the school;
- evidence of the involvement of disabled students in the full life of the school (for example, participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and on school trips);
- observable changes in staff confidence in teaching and supporting disabled students with a range of needs;
- progressive planned improvements to the physical environment of the school; and
- information for students is available in a range of formats.

8 Linked Policies

8.1 This Plan will contribute to the review and revision of related school plans and policies, including the school development plan, staff development policy and plans, site development strategy, SEN policy, Equal Opportunities policy and curriculum policies.

Accessibility Policy and Plan
Appendix 1: Accessibility Plan

Short Term			
Action Required	**By whom**	**When**	**Success Criteria**
Ensure where possible that school visits, including overseas visits, are made accessible to all students irrespective of attainment or impairment	SLT and trip leaders	Immediate	
Advise teachers on best ways to organise classrooms to meet disabled students' needs	LVB	By 31 May 2016	Learning Walks and lesson observations show classrooms organised effectively.
Provide training for all teachers on additional pressures faced by disabled students (e.g., effort expended in lip reading)	LVB	By 31 May 2016	
Ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities			▪

Medium Term			
Action Required	**By whom**	**When**	**Success Criteria**
Ensure pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements are safe, routes logical and well signed			▪
Review décor or signage to ensure it is not confusing or disorientating for disabled students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy			▪
Ensure all areas to which students should have access are well lit			▪
Investigate what steps could be made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired students (such as considering a room's acoustics, noisy equipment)			

Long Term			
Action Required	**By whom**	**When**	**Success Criteria**
Continue to improve the physical environment of the school buildings			Physical access improved:

Audit 1: Leadership and management:

Curriculum Delivery	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled students?		
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled students?		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?		
Are all students encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled students for example using lip reading?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled students to use equipment in practical work?		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled students who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all students irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Are there high expectations of all students?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		
Meeting the needs of all students	**Yes**	**No**
Does the size and layout of areas including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms, canteen, LRC/library, sports hall, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms allow access for all students?		
Can students who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL students, including students with SEN and disability; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		
Are areas to which students should have access well lit?		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired students such as considering a room's acoustics, noisy equipment?		
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?		

Delivery of materials in other formats	Yes	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for students and prospective students who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud, overhead projections and describing diagrams?		
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		

Audit 2: Classroom teachers

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure you have the necessary training to teach and support disabled students?		
Is your classroom optimally organised for disabled students?		
Do your lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?		
Are your lessons responsive to pupil diversity?		
Do your lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?		
Do you recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled students, for example using lip reading?		
Do you recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled students to use equipment in practical work?		
Do you provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled students who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are your school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all students irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Do you have high expectations of all your students?		
Do you seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for students and prospective students who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		
Do you ensure that information is presented to your classes in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud, overhead projections and describing diagrams?		
Do you ensure that you are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		