



ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Policy Review Date: September 2024

Version	Date	Updated By
1	April 2023	G. Mann

Rationale

This policy supports the school vision of a community where education is highly valued, diversity is embraced and each individual is encouraged to take control of their learning, embrace challenge and to develop into responsible young citizens. As such, the school seeks to:

- respond positively to the guidance in the DfES document 'Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils' and,
- adhere to current legislation.

Introduction

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002 (revised 2014:2010), the proprietor has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

For the purposes of this policy the broad definition of 'disability' is taken from the DDA Act 1995 as follows - a person should be deemed disabled if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These impairments include sensory impairments and learning difficulties and include certain medical conditions which may have a long-term and substantial effect on pupils' lives.

Pupils at Willow Park School will have an Education, Health and Care Plan, which recognises their complex needs that include but are not limited to a diagnosis of Autism and / or social, emotional and mental health needs. They may also have associated learning difficulties of one type or another. Whilst these difficulties may not wholly represent those presented above in the definition of disability we believe that our pupils access needs should be considered with the same level of seriousness. In addition, visitors to the school may have such difficulties and we would wish them to feel welcome to our school and to be able to access as much of it as possible.

Aims of the policy

To meet our responsibilities under the DDA the school will prepare and maintain an accessibility plan for increasing, over time, the accessibility of the school for disabled pupils and others. The plan will seek to:

- Increase and ensure the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- Improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services: and

- Improve the delivery to disabled pupils of written information which is provided to pupils who are not disabled.

The Accessibility Plan

The school will develop and maintain an accessibility plan. The responsibility for the plan will rest with the senior management team. The general arrangement of the school has been implemented to be compliant with part M of the Building Regulations. The ground floor of the school is fully accessible. All future site work will conform to DDA requirements. In this way the school will develop a continuous process of improvement in access.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the plan will be the responsibility of the senior management team. They will report on progress to Acorn Education and Care at regular intervals. They may use a number of indicators to measure the success of the plan including such things as:

- Greater satisfaction being expressed by both pupils and their parents/carers.
- Evidence of the greater involvement of groups of pupils in the full life of the school.
- Improvements in staff confidence in teaching and supporting pupils.
- Improvements to the physical environment of the school.
- Information for pupils in a range of formats.

The school's accessibility plan will be available to interested parties on request at reasonable times.

Accessibility Plan

Element 1: Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a physical disability and/or sensory impairments, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that all pupils are prepared for their next steps.

The school recognises that the curriculum covers not only teaching and learning but the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in leisure, sporting and cultural activities and school visits. Thus curriculum access will be considered at a whole school level as barriers to access of the curriculum can affect many different groups of pupils.

Target	Actions	Timescale	Success Criteria
During admissions assessment, identify if a pupil requires specialist equipment to access the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and source specialist equipment - Staff to access training in if required 	Ongoing – takes place during assessment process prior to admission	Pupils arrive at school with the appropriate equipment and resources needed to access learning
Identify appropriate clinical input and therapeutic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joined up working during admission stage - Identify clinical and therapeutic support (SALT, OT, Clinical) 	Ongoing	Pupils’ learning will be supported by appropriate clinical and therapeutic services. This could include SALT support, sensory profiling etc.
Produce an annual plan outlining a range of activities to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a Values Map to encompass cultural events and curriculum links - All staff to contribute to the plan and implementation of plan 	Ongoing – full review to take place each term	Pupils participate in a range of activities alongside the taught curriculum to widen their experiences and support growth and development
Review extra-curricular options and lunchtime clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through School Council and form time, identify activities and curriculum options that pupils would like to participate in - Create a responsive timetable with key review dates 	Termly	Pupils will access a range of chosen, enriching activities to support their personal, social and emotional development
Carry out annual curriculum reviews to ensure pupils are able to access a broad curriculum for as long as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All staff to research own curriculum areas to identify accredited routes and experiences - All pupils in Y9 to complete options choices for Y10 and Y11 	Annually	The curriculum will be continually developed, allowing pupils to study as broadly as possible for as long as possible. Pupils will make informed choices in Y9 with the support of school staff, families and external careers guidance.

Element 2: Improve and maintain access to the physical environment of the school; adding specialist facilities as necessary.

The school was an industrial unit before our conversion to a special needs school for young people with complex needs. As such, it already meets recent requirements of the Building Regulations and The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (2012). Further, where new furniture and equipment is being purchased in the developing school, such needs will be taken into consideration. For example, when purchasing carpets these will, as far as possible, be low pile, high density to facilitate the ease with which a wheelchair user could move within the buildings.

Target	Actions	Timescale	Success Criteria
Develop a wellness hub to include an intervention space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop purpose built therapeutic spaces for SALT, OT, Psychotherapy, Psychology and an intervention environment. 	Ongoing / to be completed by the end of the Autumn Term 2023	The wider curriculum and therapeutic offer will further develop, enabling pupils to access a wider range of experiences in a purpose built setting
Develop connections with a local college / teaching space to enhance the vocational curriculum offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource the learning environments - Recruit qualified staff - Develop the curriculum offer and qualification pathway 	Ongoing / to be completed by the end of the Autumn Term 2023	The curriculum will further develop and will extend our vocational and practical skills offer

Element 3: Improve the delivery of information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with special educational needs and/or disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

The school will continually review practice to ensure that information presented to pupils is done so in such a way as to ensure full understanding. This may involve publishing documents such as the pupil handbook in different forms e.g. wholly written; re-written using language at different levels of readability; providing some information in pictorial form; offering pupils the opportunity to discuss the information on offer thus using an oral rather than written approach.

Target	Actions	Timescale	Success Criteria
<p>Ensure written material is accessible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the use of online platforms to share information digitally for all. - Review pupils accessibility requirements through the form teams to ensure all have access to appropriate materials and devices. - Incorporate statement on school's website stating that written information is available in other formats upon request i.e. large print, coloured paper - Develop accessible safeguarding information for pupils - Include social stories and information in a pictorial form for key events and the pupil handbook. 	<p>By December 2023</p>	<p>Parental information to be shared via our engagement platform: iSAMS</p> <p>Email out training materials to staff for increased accessibility</p> <p>Parents and visitors will have be able to request accessible information</p>