

Access Plan Policy

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A SCHOOL WHICH TRULY RESPECTS AND VALUES EACH CHILD AS AN INDIVIDUAL

YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVE THE SCHOOL MOTIVATED AND WITH ASPIRATION, EQUIPPED TO ENTER FURTHER EDUCATION, TRAINING OR EMPLOYMENT

A SCHOOL WHERE PUPILS ACHIEVE BEYOND WHAT IS EXPECTED ARE EMPOWERED TO MAKE POSITIVE CHOICES ABOUT THEIR LIVES AND HAVE RICH AND VARIED EXPERIENCES.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM ARE SUCCESSFUL AND FULFILLED WITHIN A SUPPORTIVE AND UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY

Introduction

Inclusion is the process of taking necessary steps to ensure that everyone is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous discrimination law and provides a single piece of legislation covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful.

The school recognises its duty to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils and for everyone who uses the school.

The definition of disability under the law is a wide one. A disabled person is someone who has a

“Physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.”

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments and we recognise that as a result of their autism many of our pupils will have severe sensory impairments which impact upon their ability to attend and learn within a school environment.

Autism has many invisible disabling factors, and we seek to recognise these and enable our pupils to identify how they affect their learning and general well-being. It is therefore of key importance to us that we provide an educational environment where it is possible to reduce the impact of sensory disturbance on our pupils' progress.

We also seek to enable our pupils to find strategies that will help them to overcome or manage their sensory processing difficulties and this is key to our curriculum with its strong emphasis on teaching functional communication and emotional regulation.

Aims

Our school's accessibility plans are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum
- Ensuring the physical environment of the school enables pupils, staff and other school users who have a disability to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

We recognise the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and will regularly review them.

1. Improving access to the physical environment of schools

“This includes improvements to the environment of the school, which can include visual, acoustic and physical environments. All new school buildings have to comply with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and should be physically accessible to disabled pupils. Much of the work in the area of improving the physical environment will therefore involve improving access to existing buildings.”

Church Lawton School is a new build and as such complies to relevant building regulations. In many cases, because it has been designed specifically for pupils whose needs lie on the autism spectrum and because specialist advice has been sought, it exceeds the minimum standards required. Its interior design has been chosen to minimise visual and tactile disturbances for people with sensory processing difficulties, with consideration having been given to surfaces, textures, finishes and colour. Its mechanical and engineering specification ensures the highest possible acoustic standards and best possible lighting scheme within the given budget.

To meet the needs of pupils with high levels of challenging behaviour the physical design of the building allows for small calming environments throughout the school. Facilities have been provided that will allow pupils to develop their independent living skills. Specialist, strong, furniture will be provided for those who need it. The school has been designed to be as safe and secure as possible.

2. Increasing access for disabled pupils to the curriculum

Access to the curriculum covers not only teaching and learning, but also the wider curriculum such as after-school activities, community-based learning, sporting and cultural activities, school visits and inclusion programmes.

As an autism specialist school our curriculum is completely focused on meeting the individual needs of each one of our pupils. Staff have an additional five training days a year that focuses upon autism awareness and out autism specific curriculum. Every pupil has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) to help them overcome their barriers to learning, increase their curriculum access and make expected progress or better.

Our rigorous assessment tracking ensures that plans are reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure these aims are met. Where learning activities are not appropriate for someone because of their disability a suitable and relevant alternative will be found.

3. Improving the delivery of written information to disabled pupils

“This covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its pupils available to disabled pupils. Information should take account of pupils’ disabilities and parents’ preferred formats and should be made available within a reasonable timescale.”

In an autism specific school written information is always adapted to best meet the individual needs of pupils. This may involve changing the colour on which materials are presented, use of ICT, symbolic representation or even the use of objects of reference for those with the most complex needs. If necessary, we will use auditory or video strategies to convey information to pupils.

Information to parents and other stakeholders will be conveyed in a variety of ways, e.g. by letter, email, text, telephone. We will always respond to individual requests to modify our communication systems to improve accessibility.

Through information gathering we will determine the best ways of conveying written information and will regularly review and update our strategies.

This plan will be reviewed and updated annually and will continue be informed by:

- The views and aspirations of our pupils themselves
- The views and aspirations of the families of pupils
- The views and aspirations of other staff, stakeholder, disabled people or voluntary organisations