

EDAC27 | Accessibility Plan for Acacia School

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1. Aims

1.1.1 Schools are required under the *Equality Act 2010* to have an accessibility plan.

The purpose of the plan is to:

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

1.1.2 Our school aims to treat all its pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind.

1.1.3 The plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request.

1.1.4 Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the *Equality Act 2010*, including understanding disability issues.

1.1.5 The school supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan.

1.1.6 Our school's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, this procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

2. Legislation and Guidance

2.1.1 This document aims to meet the requirements of Schedule 10 of the *Equality Act 2010* and the Department for Education (DfE) *Guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010*.

2.1.2 The *Equality Act 2010* defines an individual as disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a “substantial” and “long-term” adverse effect on his or her ability to undertake normal day to day activities.

2.1.3 Under the *Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice*, “long-term” is defined as “a year or more” and “substantial” is defined as “more than minor or trivial”. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

2.1.4 Schools are required to make “reasonable adjustments” for pupils with disabilities under the *Equality Act 2010*, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

2.1.5 The *Independent School Standards 2014* are relevant when reviewing accessibility. This document has considered the standards relating to the quality of education, pupils' welfare and premises, alongside the separate legal duty to maintain an accessibility plan. DfE guidance specifically notes that the accessibility-plan requirement arises under the Equality Act, even though producing a plan is not itself an Independent School Standard.

3. Action Plan

This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the *Equality Act 2010*. It is the responsibility of Headteachers to ensure implementation, and objectives should be fed into the School Development Plan. Progress and quality of implementation will be overseen by the Education Governance Committee.

3.1 Aim 1: Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability

Current good practice	Objectives	Actions to be taken	Success criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our school offers a personalised and adapted curriculum for all pupils. • Resources are tailored to the needs of pupils who all require support to access the curriculum. • The curriculum is supported by the use of therapy interventions & specialist support to ensure barriers to learning are addressed. • Curriculum resources include examples of people with disabilities and reflect the neurodiversity of the school. • Curriculum progress is tracked for all pupils, including those with a disability using EHCP, Earwig & MAPP processes. • Targets are set effectively and are appropriate for pupils with additional needs – EHCP MAPP outcomes. • The curriculum is reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils. • Classroom layouts and teaching methods are planned with the requirements of disabled pupils/those with EHCPs in mind. 	Year 1 - Ensure staff have access to specific training on disability	Training for all staff on disability equality through internal induction and relevant CPD courses. Assign in-service training sessions to the training identified e.g. Makaton, sensory integration, Trauma informed practice etc.	All staff work from a disability equality and enabling perspective.
	Year 1 -Increase confidence of staff in differentiating the curriculum	Regular audit of staff training needs on curriculum accessibility, following feedback from regular QA processes	Raised staff confidence in strategies for differentiation and increased pupil participation.
	Year 1 -Ensure all staff are aware of individual pupils' curriculum accessibility needs	Review of pupil ICP's template and implementation of pupil learning passports to simply information available to staff to ensure meeting pupil needs Purchase resources as required to increase pupil participation in lessons	All staff are aware of individual pupils' accessibility needs and are able to provide the necessary resources for increased pupil participation and learning.
	Year 1 - Ensure staff are aware of, and able to use the latest SEN software and resources	Ongoing audit SEN ICT and other resources including classrooms and act on the findings	Classroom staff have a working knowledge of the software used by pupils and can offer specific targeted support to pupils on an individual or group basis.
	Year 2 - Improve pupil access to the curriculum by maintaining a total communication environment e.g ensuring access to symbol software on class/teacher/school laptop/ computers.	Ensure site licences for Symwriter/Communicate iPrint and other appropriate programmes are installed on all class computers and encourage pupils to make wider use of ICT in lessons.	Pupils have the opportunity to use latest symbol software to support and extend their access to any curriculum subject.
	Year 2 – Review IT equipment within classrooms (whiteboards, iPads, relevant app availability etc) and ensure functionality and accessibility remains in keeping with level of need within each specific classroom	Carry out review and feed any change in need into CAPEX plans	ICT hardware and programmes are up to date and accessible to meet the wide ranging and changing needs of pupils.
	Year 3 – Review the school Curriculum offer, identifying phases for individual pupils' reflective of need	Complete a curriculum audit reflective and supportive of the requirements set out within the DDA and Equality Act, and act on the findings	The curriculum reflects best practice across the whole subject range.

3.2 Aim 2: Improve and maintain access to the physical environment

Current good practice	Objectives	Actions to be taken	Success criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school considers and takes into account the needs of pupils and visitors with physical challenges and impairments. The environment is adapted to needs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disabled toilets and changing facilities Ramps Lift Class groupings and dynamics Disabled parking bays Internal decoration including lighting, colour schemes and floor surfaces Physical aids to support education in place, including. ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, switches, photocopying enlargement facilities specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children/staff/parents with motor coordination and poor hand-eye skills, specialist pens and pencils, sloping desks, booster seats and specialist seating. 	Year 1 – Ensure all colleagues are aware of the accessibility needs of all pupils	Incorporate access arrangements as appropriate to pupils' ICPs and feature in all education plans	Individual care and education plans in place for all pupils and all staff aware of all pupils' accessibility needs
	Year 1 - Improve playground and outside offer for pupils	Review current offer and make a plan for improvements where required to increase accessibility and safety	Improved accessibility, safety and opportunities for meaningful recreation for pupils at playtime
	Year 1 – Ensure all new or ongoing building work has considered the relevant accessibility guidance	Share accessibility guidelines with relevant personnel/ external contractors See relevant Facilities policies and procedures	Minimal disruption and maximum safety for pupils during and following the completion of works
	Year 2 - Improve external access and signage for disabled visitors	Consult with relevant stakeholders to ascertain need for improvement and act on the findings	Improved accessibility and safety for visitors
	Year 2 – Review environments to ensure they are as autism friendly as possible	Occupational Therapists to carry out an audit to ascertain the need for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controllable (dimmed) lighting Changes to décor to ensure autism friendliness Access to outside space from classrooms Suitability of furnishings for the cohort in place Classroom layouts 	Autism-friendly environment
	Year 2 – Improve the existing sports/play barn to ensure improved PE offering	Work with Occupational Therapists and Maintenance Team to identify improvements required. Utilise SaLTs to hear pupils' voices to inform plans	Increased quality of indoor PE/play offering

3.3 Aim 3: Improve the delivery of information to pupils with a disability

Current good practice	Objectives	Actions to be taken	Success criteria
Our strong SaLT offering ensures information provided by the schools to its pupils is be accessible to all. The information takes into account pupils' disabilities, pupils' and parents' preferred formats and is made available within a reasonable time frame. The information includes handouts, timetables and information about school events.	Year 1 - To ensure the communication needs of pupils are being meet within the current offering and that the school is continuing to promote a total communication approach including Makaton, symbols & photographs to aid and support pupils' comprehension of spoken language and information	SaLT to carry out an audit based on each pupils individual needs. This should include all aspects of communication including written, oral, sign language and access to appropriate technology. Accessible signage and display boards in the school will be included on this review.	All pupils have access to information/communication in their preferred/required formats
	Year 2 - To improve school publications to make them more accessible to those with disabilities	Audit existing in-house publications (including relevant policies) and amend in different formats when required, including large print, font, coloured backgrounds.	Parents/carers with disabilities have access to the information they require about the school.

4. Accessibility Audit

Feature	Description	Actions to be taken	Person responsible	Date to complete
Number of storeys	The main school building has 2 storeys; There are 2 storeys in the school building; two upstairs classrooms are smaller in size. Classrooms downstairs are larger with access to outside space within these classrooms (through at least 1 external exit)The Eco building is a one-storey building which is separate to the main school.	Potentially staff may require support to carry heavier items up the stairs, therefore, safeguards need to be in place to prevent staff injury.		
Corridor access	Corridors are well maintained to be clutter-free, with visual stimuli being appropriate to the needs of the cohort. Colours on the walls are low stimulus, and information displayed within the corridors is engaging yet meeting the cohort's sensory processing needs. Corridors adequately meet fire regulation needs, and students and staff are able to exit the school building safely and securely.			
Parking bays	There a 2 disabled parking bays accessible on site, outside the reception area. Alongside this, there are 7 minibus parking spaces for the students' minibuses. Both the minibus parking and disabled parking spaces are specifically signposted.	Ensure signage is well maintained and in place (e.g. check for damage following adverse weather)		
Entrances	The main school site has 2 pupil entrances, one being from the school playground, the other from the main carpark, where fencing and gates are in place to guide students to a safe pathway to access the entrance.			
Toilets	There are adequate toilet spaces and for both male and female pupils and for staff. There is 1 toilet for staff and visitors on the ground floor in the reception area. The main school building has 3 staff toilets, 2 downstairs and one upstairs. The school has future-proofed capacity for growth of numbers and associated staffing scope in line with capacity and business development plans.	Ensure pupil friendly signage is on the main toilet doors, to ensure pupils are aware of the appropriate toilet to access. The Eco school does not have an allocated staff toilet at present.		

Reception area	Reception areas have level access to the ground floor. Pupil access to both schools is separated out from the main reception areas.	Access to the conference room on the upper floor at Acacia School is restricted for visitors or staff members with physical disabilities, whom may find using stairs challenging. Currently there is no lift or alternative access to the conference room; therefore, visitors or staff members would currently require meetings to take place elsewhere on site, or via virtual conference. Additional spaces are being developed within the refit of the Acacia Hall building (est completion July 2027)		
Internal signage	Pupil-friendly signage is in place throughout the school to support individuals' independence skills and awareness of their environment. There is pupil-friendly signage and displays in place for safeguarding awareness and anti-bullying, with symbols to reinforce key concepts, and supportive interactive resources to prompt pupil responses and engagement with the information and aid pupil voice. Alongside this, there are student labels around the site informing students which taps have safe drinking water, hygiene instructions and general safety information. Safeguarding, whistleblowing and health and safety information is clearly displayed for staff and pupils, with key policies and procedures displayed in the staff room and offices at all times; this includes the school DSLs, LADO and direct contact details. This information is also replicated in the staff toilets, to ensure staff are aware of the policies and who to contact should they have a concern. A list of First Aiders is also displayed within the school, to ensure staff are aware of who to seek First Aid support from in the event of an injury or health need. Furthermore, the location of First Aid boxes are clearly labelled within each classroom, to ensure staff are aware of their whereabouts. Fire exits are clearly identified within the school, with appropriate fire safety labels, lighting and "glow in the dark" signage in place.	Some toilets require signs on the doors (where doors have been replaced) to inform students and staff of the location of the appropriate toileting facilities. Potentially require pupil-friendly safeguarding information to be placed in student toilets.		
Emergency escape routes	There are adequate emergency escape routes in the main school building, with one in each classroom, either side of the main school corridors and other exit points. The main fire exits have a clear pathway to the	Further pupil-friendly signage and "key word" symbols in place to support student understanding in the event of an emergency.		

	<p>assembly point in the playgrounds, with adequate signage and emergency evacuation facilities in place to ensure students are able to reach the assembly points safely.</p> <p>Where fire exits are in classrooms, the students exit onto garden grounds, where further pathways may be required to ensure safe passage. These are all paved and flat areas, and where there are stairs to traverse these are deep and rail supported.</p> <p>Eco school: there are 2 main entrances to the Eco school, one in each classroom. The doors meet fire standards and are the entrance and escape routes from the building. There are clear block pathways to the fire assembly point in the playground, with adequate signage and emergency evacuation facilities in place to ensure students are able to reach the assembly points safely.</p> <p>PEEPs (Pupil Emergency Evacuation Plans) are in place for each individual student, to support staff in recognising ways to support students in using and following routines and instructions in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>These documents are live documents and are regularly updated should essential information, resources or support be required for safe emergency evacuation. Pupil “friendly” (symbolised , simplified language,) evacuation plans are displayed in classrooms to aid pupil understanding.</p>	<p>Pathways to the main path may be required to ensure safe passage to the fire assembly points from classroom fire exits.</p> <p>There are currently 2 doors which automatically shut in the event of a fire (one is located in the middle of the school and the other is the Headteacher’s office).</p>		
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5. Review

This document will be reviewed every 3 years, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary. It will be approved by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

6. Linked Documents

6.1 Kisimul Policies

6.1.1 HS01 Health and Safety Policy and Procedure

6.1.2 EDAC09 Acacia School SEND and Inclusion Policy and Procedure

6.1.3 EDAC10 Acacia School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure

6.1.4 EDAC23 Supporting Students with Medical Conditions at Acacia School Policy and Procedure

6.2 Legislation and Guidance

6.2.1 Equality Act 2010

(Schedule 10: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10>)

6.2.2 Guidance for schools on the Equality Act (DfE, 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

6.2.3 SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DHSC, 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Document Change Log

The Change Log is a register of all authorised changes made to this document.

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