



LOOTHERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2024 – 2027

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Sex Discrimination Act. The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas. The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. The overriding principle of equalities legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However, the provisions in relation to disability are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person.

There are some minor differences around disability in the new Act when compared with the previous legislation:

- The Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must be unable to carry out to meet the definition
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The fact that it must be 'reasonable' provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be justified (bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally).
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities are under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through a statement of SEND. As in previous legislation a school must not discriminate against a student because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school to treat a disabled student unfavourably. Such treatment could amount to:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from a disability
- Harassment

Direct discrimination can never be justified but a school could justify indirect discrimination against a disabled student, and discrimination arising from a disability if the discrimination is the result of action that is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

2. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Equality Act 2010: a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment;
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial;
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping. People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Progressive conditions considered to be a disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairment are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions that are specifically excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

It should be noted that this definition is not just regarding physical difficulties but also covers a wide range of:

- Sensory difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Impairment resulting from, or consisting of, a mental illness In addition there is a range of 'hidden impairments' such as:
 - Dyslexia
 - Speech and Language Impairments
 - Autism
 - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Impairment does not itself mean that a student is disabled but rather it is the effect on the student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in one or more of the following areas that has to be considered:
 - Mobility
 - Manual dexterity
 - Physical coordination
 - Continence
 - Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
 - Speech, hearing or eyesight
 - Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
 - Perception of risk of physical danger

3. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students:

- When something we do places a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage to other students, we must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- We will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it would be reasonable to do so, and where such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage the student faces in comparison to his non-disabled peers.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The test is whether the adjustment is reasonable, and if it is then there can be no justification for why it is not made. We will not be expected to make adjustments that are not reasonable.

There is as yet no clarity on what may be 'reasonable' although the Code of Practice will include factors that should be taken into account. It will be for us to decide the reasonableness of adjustments based on the individual circumstances of each case. Factors to consider may include the financial or other resources available, the effectiveness of the adjustment, its effect on other students, health and safety requirements, and whether aids have been made available through the SEND route.

The reasonable adjustments duty is intended to complement the accessibility planning duties, and the existing SEND statement provisions, under which Local Authorities have to provide auxiliary aids and services where a statement details that provision. When a disabled student does not have a statement 3 of SEND (or the statement does not provide the necessary aid) then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will fall to the school.

As in the previous legislation we are not under a duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we should be planning to do so as part of our Accessibility planning.

4. AIMS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The planning duties on schools and Local Authorities are the same as the duties in the previous DDA. Schools are required to have an Accessibility Plan detailing how they will improve access to the physical environment, increase access to the curriculum for disabled students, and how they will improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students. The LA is required to have an Access Strategy.

At Lothersdale Primary School, we have a commitment to equal opportunities for all members of the school community and our Accessibility Plan outlines our intention to remove barriers for disabled students and to:

- increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the different areas of the national curriculum, increase access to extra-curricular activities and the wider school curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

Furthermore, under our equality duties, we intend to improve the physical environment of the school to enable any disabled person (student, parent/carer, employees or visitor) to access facilities and services and improve the availability of accessible information to any disabled person.

This Accessibility Plan will, therefore, begin the process of addressing the needs of disabled people through specific targets.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

Compliance with the disability duty under the Equality Act is consistent with the school's aims and Single Equality Scheme, and the operation of the school's/settings SEND policy.

The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates in part, to the Asset Management Plan (access section) of the School, which is undertaken regularly by the Local Authority. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The Plan will need to be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period. We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect. Students should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

5. KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of our Accessibility Plan are as follows:

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for students, and prospective students, with a disability.
- We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all students, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
- We are committed to providing all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles; and we endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum Framework which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
 - setting suitable learning challenges;
 - responding to a student's diverse learning needs;

- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

6. SCOPE OF THE PLAN

Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum.

We plan for continuing improvement of access to the curriculum for students with a disability by:

- Expanding and tailoring the curriculum as necessary to ensure that students with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied students. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or off-site visits.
- Providing of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist these students in accessing the curriculum.
- Continuing to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEND inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

The school governors will support the head teacher and school staff in:

- Considering whole-school ways of increasing participation in activities such as after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities, as well as off-site visits, particularly for difficult-to-include student groups, such as those with physical or behavioural challenges;
- how threats to participation have been analysed using risk assessment proforma and action taken to reduce those identified risks;
- deciding how the implementation of specific strategies such as flexible or shared timetabling, nurture groups, counselling provision, access to therapy, first day absence response, have enhanced attendance and participation;
- consideration of how classroom/group organisation has been targeted to ensure that all students achieved increased levels of school success;
- description of action to increase curriculum choice and/or flexibility has enhanced the access to appropriate qualifications/attainments;
- identifying student peer support mechanisms and the ways that the school has ensured students have a voice in decisions that affect them;
- ensuring that action has been undertaken to ensure that parents and carers see themselves as partners in their children's education and are increasingly willing to actively support their children's education;

The school SENCO, in addition to working with the governors, head teacher and school staff will:

- access or arrange appropriate training for staff as required by staff and students (identified through audit, advice from professional colleagues in other services,

parents/carers and young people) in order to better understand the needs of students with a range of disabilities

- be responsible for the dissemination of this knowledge to all staff;
Have their contribution to staff training evaluated, and where necessary improved, through the appraisal process;
- identify how classroom support arrangements, such as deployment of teaching assistants, provision of ICT, contribute to, and enhance learning opportunities;
- consider how the school response to students through the application of the SEND Code of Practice has improved student attainment and how effective communication regarding specific student needs has been achieved and is monitored;
- consider how liaison, increased communication and relationships with external agencies has supported and enhanced students' access to the curriculum and how this is monitored and improvements targeted;
- take action to ensure that disabled members of the school community are seen in a positive light through publications promoting disability and providing positive role models of adults with disabilities to encourage success and achievement;
- enhance the positive culture and ethos of the school by undertaking quality marks or other additional intervention to improve the school's ability to include those with disabilities.

We are aware that these adaptations are required regardless of whether the school has students or visitors with disabilities and is preparation for a situation when they do.

Improving the delivery to disabled students of information that is provided in writing for students who are disabled

We will strive to:

- produce all school literature at the correct font size to help visually impaired students;
- investigate alternative ways of providing access to information, software and activities;
- investigate ways of communicating effectively with disabled parents and carers and other disabled adult users of the site.

The school plans to improve the delivery of written information to students, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame. The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

Governors working with the head teacher and relevant school staff (such as the SENCO) will decide how this is to be achieved, perhaps by:

- Informing readers that school published material is available in a selection of formats e.g. Braille, Makaton, audio tapes and identifying how they can access this provision if requested.
- Considering how to increase information accessibility for those who have English as an additional language or other communication impairments, at school meetings etc.
- Identifying how they have considered the readability of information including that provided by the school website, and how it is monitored to ensure accessibility to a wide range of diverse needs and abilities.
- Identifying how textbooks and other student information are selected and provided to meet a diversity of student needs.
- Ensuring the monitoring of effectiveness of adult support to enhance the opportunities for students/parents who have difficulties in accessing information.

Financial Planning and Control

The Head teacher, together with the Finance Committee will review the financial implications of the School Accessibility Plan as part of the normal budget review process. The objective is that over time School Accessibility Plan actions will be integrated into the School Development Plan. We will finance the plan by identifying costs and incorporating them into current and future budget commitments.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

Management, Coordination and Implementation

Our Leadership Team will undertake a disability audit using a cross section of staff, students and parents. Signs of successful implementation of the accessibility plan will include:

- completed training and awareness opportunities to staff, Governors and parents/carers on issues regarding equality and inclusion;
- completed targeted training for particular groups of students/staff;
- collaboration through the provision of information and the sharing of good practice;
- liaison between other local schools including special schools; specific support/advice from outside the school, from services, other agencies and organisations;
- knowing that the school is aware of all support services that provide advice to schools and staff.

Monitoring

We recognise that monitoring is essential to ensure that students with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning. Governors will be required to comment in their annual report to parents on the accessibility plan and identify any revisions as necessary.

Evaluation that may be useful to judge success may include:

- changes in physical accessibility of school buildings;
- questionnaires, responses from stakeholders e.g. parents, students and staff, indicate increased confidence in the school's ability to promote access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities;
- improved levels of confidence in staff in reducing the obstacles to success for students with additional needs;
- evidence that increased numbers of students with disabilities are actively participating in all areas of the school;
- evidence that fewer students are being excluded from school opportunities as their needs are being more effectively addressed through the application of strategies and procedures;
- increased levels of achievement for students with disabilities;
- student responses; verbally, pictorially and written that indicate that they feel themselves to be included;
- Ofsted inspections that identify higher levels of educational inclusion.

Accessing the School's Plan

Students, parents and carers will be signposted to the accessibility plan. This will be done through:

- in the policies section on the school website;
- in the SEN Information Report;

We will ensure that the plan is available in different formats where requested. These formats may include large print, braille or simplified text for those students and parents/carers who have difficulty reading.

8. RELATED POLICIES

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum Policies
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy, Local Offer Response & Information Report
- Education Visits policy
- Whole School Behaviour Policy & procedures
- School Development Plan
- Complaints Procedures
- Risk Assessment Policy

Accessibility Plan: Improving Access to the Curriculum			
Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe
Differentiation in Teaching	Head teacher/Curriculum Leaders/SENCO to monitor quality of differentiation and provision for SEND pupils.	All pupils' needs are catered for in order to help them know more, remember more and do more.	Ongoing
Interventions	Head teacher/Curriculum Leaders/SENCO to audit current interventions and their success/impact on progress. Provision mapping to be used across all year groups.	Interventions have the necessary impact and support pupil catch-up	Ongoing
Classrooms are organised to promote the participation and independence of all pupils	Head teacher/Curriculum Leaders/SENCO to carry out an audit of resources and Quality First Teaching to ensure that lessons are planned to meet the needs of all pupils in the class.	All pupils' needs are catered for in order to help them know more, remember more and do more.	Ongoing
Staff training insupporting pupils with SEND – focus on the 5 key areas of need.	SENCO deliver training where possible. Identify gaps in knowledge and seek external advice if necessary	Specific needs are catered for in order to help pupils know more, remember more and do more.	Ongoing

Accessibility Plan: Improving Access to the Physical Environment			
Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe
Corridor/paths	Keep corridors/paths clear from obstructions.	Clear pathways for users	Ongoing
Wheelchair access to all entrance/exits	Keep entrance/exit points clear	Clear pathways for users	Ongoing
Disabled parking	One space allocated by drivers' entrance. Reminders to all users to respect the signage and space available.	Easy access for users	Ongoing

Accessibility Plan: Improving Access to the Written Information			
Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe
Availability of written material in alternative formats when specifically requested	The school will make itself aware of the services available for converting written information into alternative formats.	Access for users	Ongoing
Review documentation on website to check accessibility for parents with English as an Additional Language	The school will review formats publicised on school website – particularly for new parents to the school, in order to ensure accessibility for parents with English as an additional language.	Access for users	Ongoing