

Hexham Middle School

Accessibility Plan

March 2021

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1. Aims

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

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. HMS is committed to providing a full, inclusive curriculum for all students and for all students to feel valued. We want all our students to achieve their full potential academically, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

The School Ethos statement is as follows and reflects our commitment to inclusive practice:

“Outstanding eagerness to promote good learning.

This is a happy, friendly, welcoming school where we work together to become all that we can be.

We believe in the love of learning and the highest academic standards for everyone. We value education in its broadest sense. The arts, sport and good citizenship help shape us as individuals and as members of the wider community. We nurture an environment of mutual respect, built on care of others.

Through first class teaching, we are committed to enabling all our students to develop their knowledge and understanding, skills and mindset, so that they can take their next steps with confidence. Our expectation is that every child will grow into a happy, fulfilled and successful adult.”

This Accessibility Plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request.

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

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

The Trust Board recognises its responsibility under the Equality Act 2010. As part of the Equality Act, a new combined public authority duty was introduced from April 2011, covering all protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include:

- age
- disability

- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnerships
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex and sexual orientation

A disability under the equalities act 2010 is: ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse affect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities’. This definition includes physical disabilities and others with sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

The Trust Board recognises its duty:

- not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students so they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- to publish an Accessibility Plan to increase access to education for disabled students

The plan has three interlinked elements:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum by:
 - Providing for all students a curriculum which is appropriate to their needs.
 - Ensuring that the curriculum is taught in such a way that all students, regardless of any disability may benefit fully from it.
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services by:
 - Ensuring that all the school buildings and grounds are fully accessible to students with mobility, sensory and other disabilities (impairments).
 - Providing appropriate educational equipment and physical aids to ensure that the curriculum can be accessed fully by all students.
- Improving the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled students by:
 - Providing for students and their parents/carers information about the school and its curriculum in a format that takes account of any disability

HMS has clear ways of identifying, assessing and making provision for SEN and disability (SEND) as set out in our SEND information report.

We are an inclusive school and welcome learners with different needs and are receptive to new requests regarding accessibility issues and update our accessibility plan as the need arises. We respect the voice of the learner and their family and will always discuss their preferences regarding how learners’ needs should be met. At HMS we make reasonable adjustments for SEND students, including provision of auxiliary aids and services to ensure we minimise any disadvantage for disabled young people.

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.

We have included a range of stakeholders in the development of this accessibility plan, including pupils, parents, staff and governors of the school. We have also been in consultation with architects and wider professionals regarding the new school build.

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements of [schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010](#) and the Department for Education (DfE) [guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010](#).

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.

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.

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.

3. Action plan

This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Aim	Current good practice <i>Include established practice and practice under development</i>	Objectives <i>State short, medium and long-term objectives</i>	Actions to be taken	Person responsible	Date to complete actions by	Success criteria
Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability	<p>Differentiation is used regularly across the school to best meet the needs of students.</p> <p>We use resources tailored to the needs of students who require support to access the curriculum. Curriculum progress is tracked for all students, including those with a disability.</p> <p>Targets are set effectively and are appropriate for students with additional needs.</p> <p>The curriculum is reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all students. Intervention is in place for those students needing extra support.</p>	<p><u>Short term:</u> Students physical and learning needs are to be regularly communicated with staff. These needs will be regularly reviewed with parents and students.</p> <p><u>Medium Term:</u> The SENCO, and wider SLT, will gain a deeper understanding of department planning and intervention for students where disability is a barrier to learning.</p> <p><u>Longer term:</u> The school curriculum will be reviewed and adapted to best meet the needs of all students</p>	<p>Good communication to continue between school and the parents/carers of students with disabilities.</p> <p>Quality of Education reviews to take place across all departments; this will include various members of the school's leadership team including the SENCO.</p> <p>The SENCO will be part of the decision making around curriculum development.</p>	<p>SENCO and team</p> <p>SLT</p> <p>SLT</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 2021</p> <p>July 2021</p>	<p>Student profiles will be up to date and all teachers will know the needs and suggested strategies for students with physical and learning disabilities.</p> <p>The reviews will show that the school curriculum is accessible to all students and that plans are in place to address barriers and difficulties.</p> <p>Progress and attainment measures show that students with physical or learning disabilities are making expected progress.</p>

<p>Improve and maintain access to the physical environment</p>	<p>Our current school site is adapted to the needs of pupils as required. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramps • Elevators • Corridor width • Disabled parking bays • Disabled toilets 	<p><u>Short term:</u> The architects developing the new school site will liaise with the school leadership team, including the SENCO, as well as health professionals to ensure that it meets the needs of students with physical disabilities.</p> <p><u>Medium Term:</u> The SEN Team will support students with disabilities, and their parents, in the transition to the new school site.</p> <p><u>Longer Term:</u> The new site will be maintained, and where needed, adapted to meet students' needs.</p>	<p>Regular meetings between school and the architects.</p> <p>Visits to the new site will take place as part of the transition process.</p> <p>Ongoing review and maintenance.</p>	<p>Executive Headteacher</p> <p>SENCO</p> <p>Site manager, Business Manager, SENCO.</p>	<p>Spring and summer term 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p> <p>Ongoing from September 2021</p>	<p>The development of a new school site that is a suitable learning environment for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Students and parents are confident about adaptations within the new site.</p> <p>A school site that is a suitable learning environment for students with disabilities.</p>
<p>Improve the delivery of information to pupils with a disability</p>	<p>Our school uses a range of communication methods to ensure information is accessible. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal signage • Large print resources where needed. • Pictorial or symbolic representations 	<p><u>Short term:</u> Students physical and learning needs are to be regularly communicated with staff. These needs will be regularly reviewed with parents and students.</p> <p><u>Medium term:</u> Signage on the new school site will be developed to be appropriate and meet the needs of students.</p>	<p>Good communication to continue between school and the parents/carers of students with disabilities.</p> <p>Regular meetings between school and the architects.</p>	<p>SENCO and Team</p> <p>Business Manager, site staff, SENCO</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2021</p>	<p>Students are able to take a full part in lessons and wider school life.</p> <p>Students with disabilities can navigate the school site safely.</p>

4. Monitoring arrangements

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 Headteacher.

5. Links with other policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Risk assessment policy
- Health and safety policy
- Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication
- Special educational needs (SEN) information report
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy