Highcroft School

Accessibility Policy

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Accessibility Policy

Policy Number:	EDE/POL/010	Policy Owner Job Role	Quality Manager
Issue Number:	008	Ratified By	Quality Director
Issue Date:	01.07.26	Service Type:	Schools
		Applicable Services:	Education
Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	Yes		
Relevant Regulations	- Equality Act 2010 The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 - Part 3 (Welfare, Health and Safety), Part 5 (Premises and Accommodation), Part 6 (Provision of Information) - SEND Code of Practice (0–25) - Education (School Premises) Regulations 2012		
Note	This policy should not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

Table of Contents

Section	
1	Supporting Documents
2	Introduction
3	Aim & Scope
4	Abbreviations/Definitions
5	Policy Content
5.1	Improving Access to the Physical Environment
5.2	Increasing Access to the Curriculum
5.3	Improving Delivery of Written Information
5.4	Accessibility and Safeguarding
6	Responsibilities
7	Monitoring and Review
8	Equality Impact Statement
9	Version Control (where else is this policy located, ie. Circle, Nourish, Radar)
10	Appendices

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1. Supporting Documents

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND policy
- Admissions Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

2. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 mandates that all schools and local authorities develop and implement plans to improve accessibility for disabled pupils.
Since September 2002, schools, including independent schools, and local authorities have been required to develop accessibility strategies and plans.
Highcroft School is committed to providing a fully accessible environment that values and includes all pupils, staff, parents/carers, and visitors, regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional, or cultural needs.
We are dedicated to challenging attitudes towards disability and accessibility and fostering a culture of awareness, tolerance, and inclusion.
Highcroft School maintains individual accessibility plans (appendix A), reviewed and updated every three years, tailored to the needs of our pupils.

3. Aim/Scope

This policy aims to create and maintain an inclusive educational environment for the entire school community, promoting ongoing awareness, tolerance, and inclusion.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

The Equality Act (2010) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a 'substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal, day to day activities.'
This includes sensory impairments (such as sight or hearing loss) and mental illnesses that are clinically recognised; for example, diagnosed neurodevelopmental conditions, including Autism, ADHD and SEMH needs where they impact access.
Not all disabled pupils have Special Educational Needs (SEN), and not all pupils with SEN have disabilities under this legislation. Many pupils may have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

5. Policy Content

5.1 Improving Access to the Physical Environment

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We commit to enhancing the physical environment of [School Name], including visual, acoustic, and physical aspects, to meet the needs of disabled pupils. Reasonable adjustments may include sensory adaptations, assistive technologies, and differentiated communication methods.

All new buildings comply with Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations (2012) to ensure physical accessibility.

5.2 Increasing Access to the Curriculum

Access to the curriculum encompasses teaching and learning as well as extracurricular activities such as after-school clubs, leisure, sports, cultural events, and school visits.

We tailor accessibility planning to pupils with EHCPs and complex needs to ensure full participation.

5.3. Improving Delivery of Written Information

We ensure that written materials provided to pupils are available in formats suitable to their abilities and needs, delivered within reasonable timescales.

Local authorities and schools review and revise accessibility strategies and plans regularly, prioritising resources for effective implementation.

5.4 Accessibility and Safeguarding

Due to the strong link between accessibility and safeguarding, it is recognised that barriers to access can increase vulnerability, create attendance issues, lead to disengagement and increase the risk of exclusion.

Highcroft School ensures that accessibility planning supports safeguarding by promoting engagement, inclusion and enables access to education.

6. Responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring accessibility planning is implemented effectively and reviewed regularly.

The SENCo supports the identification of barriers to access and ensures that reasonable adjustments are made.

Senior leaders monitor accessibility improvements and ensure alignment with SEND provision.

All staff are responsible for implementing inclusive practice in their daily work.

7. Monitoring and Review

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The school maintains a written Accessibility Plan in accordance with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Progress is monitored through:

- Review of individual accessibility plans

- Feedback from pupils and parents/carers

- Analysis of attendance, engagement, and participation

Senior leaders report on accessibility to the governing body to ensure oversight and continuous improvement.

In accordance with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the school maintains a written Accessibility Plan which sets out how access to education, the physical environment and information will be improved for disabled pupils over time. The plan is reviewed annually and updated whenever significant changes to provision, premises or pupil needs occur.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

To ensure a person-centred approach, the pupil voice and parental/carer input will support accessibility planning. If any individual or group believes they are disadvantaged by this policy, they should contact the Headteacher of the school. [School Name] and Keys Group will respond proactively to such concerns.

9. Version Control

This document can be found in Radar. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The named owner for review at Highcroft School is the headteacher.

10. Appendices

Appendix A – Accessibility Plan Template

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Highcroft School
Equality and Accessibility Plan 2024/27

1. Legal background

Equality Act 2010.
Equality and diversity are critical to delivering the DfE's vision: to provide children's services, education and skills training that ensures opportunity is equal for all, no matter background, family circumstances, or need. We enable children and learners to thrive by protecting and supporting the vulnerable and disadvantaged and ensuring the delivery of excellent education.

I. 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 students. Much of the work in the area of improving the physical environment will therefore involve improving access to existing building.

II. Increasing access for disabled students to the curriculum

Access to the curriculum covers not only teaching and learning, but also the wider curriculum such as after school activities, leisure, sporting and cultural activities or school visits.

III. Improving the delivery of written information to disabled students

This covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its students available to disabled students. Information should take into account student's disabilities and parents preferred formats and should be made available within a reasonable timescale. LEA's and schools have a duty to review their strategies and plans revise them if necessary and to implement them. LEA's and schools should prioritise resources for implementing their strategies and plans.

2. Definitions

The Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. The Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

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Schools previously had a statutory duty which required them to take proactive steps to tackle disability discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity for disabled pupils. Under the Equality Act, this has been replaced by the general equality duty and the specific duties.

1. This accessibility plan has been drawn up in consultation with the senior management team responsible for Highcroft School and covers the period from September 2024 to September 2027.
2. This statement sets out in the ways in which Highcroft School provides access to education for students with a disability.
3. At Highcroft School, we are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all students, staff and parents/carers and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory social, spiritual, emotionally and cultural needs. We are further committed to challenging attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
4. Highcroft School plans, over time, to increase the accessibility of provision for all students, staff and visitors to the school. The following areas will form the basis of the Accessibility Plan with relevant actions to:
    - Increase access to the curriculum. Incorporating school activities and including educational visits
    - Improve access to the physical environment of the school.
    - Improve the delivery of written information to students, staff, parents/carers and visitors with disabilities.
5. Attached are three action plans, relating to these three key aspects of accessibility. These plans will be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis. New plans will be drawn up for the following three year period, 2024-2027.
6. It is acknowledged that there will be the need for on-going awareness raising and training for all staff in the matter of disability discrimination and the potential need to inform attitudes on this matter.
7. This accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:
    - Equal Opportunities
    - Health and Safety
    - Special Needs
    - Behaviour Management
    - School Prospectus and Mission Statement
8. The school plan will be monitored on an on-going basis by the senior management team responsible for Highcroft School

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Appendix B – Reasonable Adjustments Checklist

- Sensory adaptations (e.g., noise-cancelling headphones, tinted overlays)
- Assistive technology (e.g., speech-to-text software, adapted keyboards)
- Differentiated communication (e.g., simplified language, visual supports)
- Physical environment adjustments (e.g., ramps, handrails, accessible toilets)
- Flexible curriculum delivery (e.g., alternative assessments, adapted timetables)
- Staff awareness and training on individual needs
- Accessible formats for written materials (large print, braille, audio)
- Support from specialist services (e.g., occupational therapy, speech therapy)
- Emotional regulation support strategies
- Trauma informed approaches
- Access to Therapeutic Support

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Appendix C – Accessibility Audit Tool

Area Reviewed	Accessibility Strengths	Areas for Improvement	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Review Date
Entrances and exits					
Corridors and pathways					
Classrooms					
Toilets and changing facilities					
Signage					
Lighting and acoustics					
Emergency procedures					

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Appendix D – Communication Support Protocol

- Identify pupils' and families' preferred communication methods.
- Provide written materials in accessible formats (large print, braille, audio, digital).
- Use visual supports and symbols where appropriate.
- Ensure staff are trained in communication needs and strategies.
- Review communication support regularly with pupils and families.
- Liaise with external specialists for communication aids and advice.

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Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment Template

Policy/Practice/Change Assessed	Date of Assessment	Assessor(s)

Protected Characteristic	Potential Impact (Positive/Negative/None)	Mitigation or Enhancement Actions
Age		
Disability		
Gender		
Race/Ethnicity		
Religion or Belief		
Sexual Orientation		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Gender Reassignment		

Summary and Recommendations:

Assessor Signature: **Date:**

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