# Accessibility Policy

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| 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<br><br>The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 - Part 3 (Welfare, Health and Safety), Part 5 (Premises and Accommodation), Part 6 (Provision of Information)<br><br>- SEND Code of Practice (0–25)<br><br>- Education (School Premises) Regulations 2012 | | |
| Note | This policy should not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director | | |

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## 1. Supporting Documents




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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.
Acorns 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.
Acorns 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

We commit to enhancing the physical environment of Acorns School, 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.



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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.

Acorns 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

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



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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. Acorns School 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 next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at Acorns School is the headteacher.

## 10. Appendices

**Appendices – Procedures and Localisation of Policy**



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**Appendix A – Accessibility Plan Template**

# Acorns School Equality and Accessibility Plan

## A- Improving Access to the Curriculum

| Priority Area | Proposed Response /action | Resources | Timeframe | Outcome | Signed as completed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Continue to develop further range of new and up-to-date learning resources that are accessible for students with disabilities | Continuous upgrading of resources for various learning levels | Time allocation<br><br>Training<br>Finance | Ongoing | Pupils with disabilities have increasing access to learning materials | |
| Teachers further develop their knowledge of different teaching and learning styles | Head Teacher/SENCo to identify Professional Development Opportunities as appropriate | Time Allocation<br><br>Training | Ongoing | Teachers to use Multiple Intelligence principles to assess and cater to a wide range of learning styles for all pupils, particularly those with SEN and Disabilities, to improve their achievement. | |
| Disability equality issues are incorporated in the Citizenship and PSHE/SMSC curriculum | Continuously introduce new elements into the Citizenship/PSHE/SMSC schemes of work to address relevant issues | Text Books<br><br>Resources | Ongoing | Students have a greater understanding of disability issues | |
| Teachers develop skills to | Senior Management to arrange specific training for new and existing | Time Allocation | Ongoing | Staff have a greater understanding | |



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| work with pupils with specific needs | staff relating to disabilities experienced by pupils-<br>Identified member of staff to complete Mental Health First Aid training | Training Day | | of disability issues.<br><br>Mental Health First Aider available for staff. | |

## B- Improving Access to the Physical Environment

| Priority Area | Proposed Response /action | Resources | Timeframe | Outcome | Signed as completed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ensure fire procedures take into account the needs of pupils with disabilities | Continual review the needs of identified pupils. | Specific needs identified in referral paperwork.<br><br>Ongoing | Ongoing | Any pupils or staff with physical mobility issues have a PEEP in place and safe passage of exit. | |

## C- Improving Access to Information

| Priority Area | Proposed Response /action | Resources | Timeframe | Outcome | Signed as completed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Make information more accessible to pupils, parent/carer, staff and visitors | Review format of Prospectus and other relevant information and policies | Ongoing | Ongoing | | |

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.



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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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