



New Forest Small School

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN

Member of Staff Responsible	Alison Alp
Regularity of Review	Annually
This Version Dated	June 2018
Next Review Due	June 2019

Rationale

At the New Forest Small School, our educational philosophy is founded upon the belief that people's full potential can only be realised when their sense of well-being and belonging is at its optimum. As a result, we are committed to:

- Tailoring our curriculum to suit the specific needs of each individual child, ensuring that no child is ever academically left behind or socially excluded;
- Providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors, whatever their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs;
- Taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and, more broadly, taking steps to promote the mental wellbeing of all pupils and staff;
- Developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school.

This Accessibility Policy and Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010. The Head Teachers are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period, with appropriate input and support from the Governance Advisory Board.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act. The effect of the law is the same as in the past, meaning that "schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation".

Principles

The school recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities, and respects parents' and pupils' right to confidentiality. Personal data relating to parents, pupils and staff are processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

It is the policy of the Head Teachers to improve access to buildings and facilities over a period of time, as finances permit.

Definition of Disability

According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if:

- a) They have a physical or mental impairment, and
- b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Admissions

We are committed to ensuring that our admissions process is fair and non-discriminatory. The New Forest Small School does not select its pupils for admission on the grounds of ability. As detailed in the school's Admissions Policy, we admit a pupil based on the need and relevance of a New Forest Small School education for a particular child, a 'taster day' (or longer trial period), previous school reports and a reference from the previous school. Formal entry tests are not a requirement for entry.

In the event of an application for admission to the school by a pupil who is a wheelchair user or has other serious mobility problems that would make it difficult or unsafe for them to use the stairs, we will be transparent about any concerns and discuss with the parent(s) whether or not NFSS is able to meet the pupil's needs adequately. Depending on the age of the pupil in question, it may be possible to accommodate them by moving lessons to ground floor classrooms where access (for example) by wheelchair is possible. Each case would be judged on the circumstances pertaining at the time.

Access to Buildings

We are committed to making any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to ensure that no child who is admitted to the New Forest Small School is educationally or socially disadvantaged because of a disability. We recognise, however, that because of the limitations of our historic building and its small site, there are inherent restrictions on the changes that we can make:

- New Forest Small School is located on half an acre of land, with one main building, one studio and one external storage & laboratory cleaning area.
- There is a ramp to the main door. However, depending on the size of wheelchairs (or other mobility aids such as walking frames) some corridors and doorways may be difficult to navigate.
- The main building, which was erected before consideration was given to disabled access, has two floors and no lift. Due to the structure of our listed building, it is not feasible to install any type of lift, stairlift or escalator. As a result, pupils, staff or visitors with impaired mobility may not be able to access the three upstairs classrooms or the music room.
- Wheelchairs have access via paths to most areas of the school, but specific parts of buildings remain inaccessible. Ramps have been constructed to make access possible, but routes may be circuitous.

Vehicular Access

Disabled parking has been provided outside the main building. Access to the school may be gained through the front door, with vehicular access available up to the porch.

Accessible Toilets

An accessible toilet for people with disabilities is located on the ground floor.

Special Educational Needs

All information relating to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) can be accessed via the SEN Policy and SEND overview spreadsheet.

Medical Issues

The school has first aid trained staff. Signed parental consent is required to administer prescribed medicines for medical disabilities such as asthma and diabetes, or to allow pupils to self-administer medications such as inhalers if appropriate, in accordance with the Administration of Medicines Policy.

Staff are aware of pupils with allergies and have been trained on the action to be taken in an anaphylactic emergency. All pupils bring their own lunches and are expected to be sensitive to the needs of others around them, e.g. protecting those with serious allergies from coming into contact with allergens that may trigger a reaction.

Sensory Impairment

Many classrooms have digital projectors that ease the viewing of subject matter. These will be helpful to those with visual impairment. Larger print course notes and examination papers, and material printed on blue paper, will be used as and when appropriate.

The provision of hearing loops has been considered but given the small size of classrooms, and the fact that we do not currently have any pupils or staff with significant hearing impairment, it is not deemed necessary for the School to install such provision at the current time.

Welfare

All staff are informed of any pupils with disabilities and of the need to be aware of potential difficulties such as bullying (see Anti-Bullying Policy) or non-integration into classes. The centre of the pastoral system is Ali (Primary) and Nick (Secondary), who are the primary points of contact.

Activities and Trips

The School encourages all pupils to attend a variety of trips and activities. These may be sporting, cultural or adventurous. At such venues the programme of activities can be modified to facilitate participation regardless of disability. Staffing ratios can be adjusted to provide extra help when necessary.

Occasionally it may be considered that the welfare of a pupil with a particular disability cannot be guaranteed, due to the nature of the disability and the specific environment and the terrain. In such circumstances, it may not be possible to provide a suitable level of supervision and care to enable the pupil to participate in the activity safely. If this happens, we are committed to providing an alternative activity with similar learning outcomes (which may be offered on the school site) so that the pupil is not disadvantaged in terms of their overall education.

Access Arrangements for External Examinations

To ease the burden of the external examinations, the School will liaise closely with the parent/guardian or student on the mechanics of the exams to be taken. Liaison may take the form of a meeting or by telephone conversation to discuss any special arrangements.

Where appropriate, the school will arrange for students who may be eligible for access arrangements to be assessed by an Educational Psychologist, and in accordance with their recommendations, may apply to the JCQ for permission to supply any or all of the following:

- Large print exam papers
- Extra time to complete the exam paper
- Alternative exam room(s) accessible to pupils with impaired mobility
- Laptop computers
- Readers or Screen Reader software
- Scribes or voice-to-text software
- Coloured papers
- Rest breaks

It will not normally be possible to provide an exam room with a hearing loop, nor provide a secretary or teacher from within school resources knowledgeable in sign language to assist and oversee the exam.

Curriculum

The school recognises the importance of ensuring that the curriculum is accessible for all pupils with disabilities. Those who have multi-agency Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or school-generated Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will be supported according to their needs (see the SEN Policy and SEND Overview Spreadsheet). Pupils who are entitled to extra time in exams will be given this in all internal as well as external exams. Laptops for exams (for example) will be allowed and provided if recommended.

Handwriting and Touch-Typing

The school actively encourages pupils to develop a clear and legible handwriting style, although we do not teach any specific style as a matter of policy. Those with fine motor difficulties, for whom handwriting is a challenge, may be allowed to use laptops in class and/or in external examinations according to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEN) Policy. We will encourage and support pupils in using appropriate software to learn touch-typing, where we feel this is useful.

Objectives of the Accessibility Plan

The New Forest Small School Accessibility Plan shows how access is to be improved for pupils, staff and visitors to the school within a given timeframe and anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable.

The Accessibility Plan is intended to complement and support the school's Equalities and Cohesion Policy and will similarly be published on the school website.

The Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:

- Improve and maintain access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary – this covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe;
- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a physical disability and/or sensory impairments, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as the able-bodied pupils; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of their duties under the Equalities Act 2010); this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or schools visits – it also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe;
- Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

The New Forest Small School Accessibility Plan relates to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written information. Whole school training will recognise the need to continue raising awareness for staff and governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

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

- Equalities and Cohesion Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Premises Management Policy
- Self-Evaluation Form / School Improvement Plan

The Accessibility Plan for physical accessibility relates to the Access Audit of the School, which remains the responsibility of the Headteachers in partnership with the Policy Adviser. It may not be feasible to undertake all of the works during the life of this accessibility plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans.

An accessibility audit will be completed by the school prior to the end of each period covering this plan in order to inform the development of a new Accessibility Plan for the ongoing period.

Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as and when school policies are reviewed. The terms of reference for all governors' committees will include the need to consider Equality and Diversity issues as required by the Equality Act 2010.

The Accessibility Plan will be published on the school website.

The Accessibility Plan will be monitored by the Governors' Advisory Board.

The Accessibility Plan may be monitored by Ofsted during inspection processes in relation to Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

The priorities for the Accessibility Plan for our school were identified by:

- Headteachers
- Teaching Staff
- Learning Support Assistants
- Policy Adviser