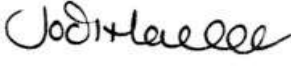





*Our vision is to create an inclusive, friendly, safe and engaging learning environment which is grounded in our Christian values, enabling children to navigate obstacles, fulfil their potential and extend their horizons.*

*We value all members of our school community and encourage their individual talents and personalities so that each can shine in their own way.*

Policy Name	Accessibility Policy
Date written:	January 27 <sup>th</sup> 2017
Date of last update/review:	March 18 <sup>th</sup> 2024
Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body:	March 18 <sup>th</sup> 2024
Date of next full review:	March 2025
Signed by head Teacher: (Jodi Hacker)	
Signed by Chair of Governors: (Simon Curd)	

### **Introduction**

On October 12<sup>th</sup> 2012, The Equality Act replaced all existing legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools.

The Act makes it unlawful for schools to discriminate against, harass, or victimize a pupil or potential pupil in relation to:

- Admissions
- The way we provide education for pupils
- The way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

The protected characteristics are:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

There is still a requirement to have an accessibility plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disable pupils to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information.

The Equality Act applies to all schools in England and Wales. (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, paragraph 3 and Disability Discrimination regulations 2005). We are required to draw up equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The accessibility Plan should be reviewed every three years. The Accessibility Plan is also compliant with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010.

The school's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimize does not end when a pupil has left the school, but relates also to events afterwards such as the provision of references, or former pupil networks. The school's Governors and Headteacher are responsible for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting on progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period.

This Accessibility Plan ensures that we continue to improve all aspects of the physical environment of the school site, the curriculum and written information so that all students with a disability can take full advantage of the education and associated opportunities provided by Hawkhurst C.E. Primary School.

### **Definition of Disability (Equality Act 2010)**

"A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term detrimental effect on his or her ability to carry out normal daily activities." Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments. In the DDA "**substantial**" means "**more than minor or trivial**". "**Long-term**" means "**has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.**"

The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning disabilities, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, **where the effect of the impairment on the pupil's ability to**

**carry out normal daily activities is diverse, substantial and long-term.** All those with cancer or surviving cancer, HIV or Multiple Sclerosis are now included from the point of diagnosis.

**A significant number of pupils are therefore included in the definition.**

### **Normal daily activities:**

The test of whether the impairment affects normal daily activities is whether it affects one or more of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- 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 or physical danger.

### **Key Objectives**

Hawkhurst C.E. Primary School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to reinforcing our culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school.

To reduce and eliminate barriers to access the curriculum and to enable full participation in the school community for pupils and prospective parents with a disability.

To reduce and eliminate barriers to access the facility for parents, visitors and staff with a disability.

### **Principles:**

- Compliance with the Equality Act consistent with the school's aims and equal opportunities policy and the operation of the schools SEND policy.
  - The school recognises its duty under the Equality Act:
    - ❖ Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions and provision of education and associated services
    - ❖ Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably than others
    - ❖ To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
    - ❖ To publish an Accessibility Plan and review it every three years
    - ❖ To ensure Governors and staff will have regard to the Equality Act 2010
    - ❖ To recognize and value parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities and respects the parents' and child's rights to confidentiality
    - ❖ To provide all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning style, and endorses the key principles in the National Curriculum which underpin the development of an inclusive curriculum.
- 1 Setting suitable learning challenges
  - 2 Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs

3 Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to our other pupils. However, where we do have to do so, we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage. When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled person, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.

Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (EHCP) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications. There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which can help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards and special software.

Our SEND policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our school. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.

Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it will be unreasonable for our school to make such provision ie hearing aids.

We consider that effective and practical adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three year accessibility plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.

It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in school life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*. For example, if a Geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled pupil could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils.

### **Physical Environment Characteristics**

#### **Site Access**

- 1 The location of the building and level access with appropriate signage offers ease of orientation to varying site users.
- 2 The safety of pedestrians has been fully considered, with the entrance areas providing a safe space to gather and circulate away from traffic.
- 3 The majority of service vehicles will utilise the carpark at the side of the kitchen, incorporating an adequate turning and drop off space.
- 4 Parking is provided for all staff and parents are not permitted to use this carpark. This includes two disabled spaces.

#### **Building Design and Access**

The building is believed to offer a secure environment for all its users, and as such the main entrance to the building and gates to access the playground are focused on close proximity to the carpark.

Hawkhurst C.E. Primary School buildings are well designed to meet the needs of disabled pupils, parents, staff and visitors with full DDA to all rooms.

- All classrooms are on the ground floor which has level access to outside
- All public access rooms, including entrances, toilets, main corridors and hall are all on the ground floor with no steps
- There are two disabled toilets in the entrance, plus a full care suite with shower and hoist
- The playing field, although on a slope is accessible to wheelchair users via a path.

### **Activities in support of Accessibility**

The school will undertake the following activities to progress towards and achieve the key objectives as explained in this document thus far:

#### **a) Delivery of the curriculum**

Governors should identify action in the school access plan to enhance teaching and learning opportunities for all those in the school community with disabilities.

These may include:

- Consideration of whole school ways of increasing participation in activities such as after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities, as well as out of school visits, particularly for difficult-to-include pupil groups, such as those with physical or behavioural challenges.
- How threats to participation have been analysed using risk assessment proformas and action taken to reduce those identified risks.
- Identifying how classroom support arrangements, such as deployment of teaching assistants, provision of ICT, contribute to, and enhance learning opportunities.
- Deciding how the implementation of specific strategies such as flexible or shared timetabling, nurture groups, counselling provision, access to therapy, first day absence reponse, have enhanced attendance and participation.
- Consideration of how classroom/group organisation has been targeted to ensure that all pupils achieved increased levels of school successes.
- Description of action to increase curriculum choice and/or flexibility has enhanced the access to appropriate qualifications/attainments.
- Consideration of the school response to pupils through the application of the SEN Code of Practice has improved pupil attainment and how effective communication regarding specific pupil needs, has been achieved and is monitored.
- Consideration of how liaison, increased communication and relationships with external agencies has supported and enhanced pupils' access to the curriculum and how this is monitored and improvements targeted.
- Identifying staff training needs in order to effectively meet the diverse abilities and disabilities of all pupils, including prospective pupils who may require manual handling, signing, personal hygiene support, etc.
- Identifying pupil peer support mechanisms and the ways that the school has ensured pupils have a voice in decisions that affect them.
- Taking 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.

- 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.
- Enhancing the positive culture and ethos of the school by undertaking quality arks or other additional intervention to improve the school's ability to include those with disabilities.
- Improving the physical environment of the school to increase accessibility for members of the school community with disabilities.

**School Staff** receive training in making the curriculum accessible to all pupils, and are aware of its importance. This training will be regularly updated. Teaching Assistants will benefit from on-going training on disabilities.

the school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services such as specialist teacher advisors and SEND inspectors/advisors, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trust and the private sector.

In particular:

- Staff will receive appropriate training to support pupils with specific difficulties, such as speech and language delay
- The SENCo will ensure that staff are aware of children's accessibility needs
- The school will continue to provide appropriate learning resources in order to make the curriculum fully inclusive and staff will be trained in the use of resources where required
- School trips will be made accessible to all
- The PE curriculum and resources will be developed to ensure that PE is accessible to all

### **b) Physical Environment**

The Governing body will want to consider and record reflection upon all areas of the physical environment such as:

- Changes to improve access to doors, toilets, changing facilities, and consideration of the impact of signs, colour schemes, lighting, heating, etc.
- Changes outside of the building eg provision of disabled parking, etc.
- Management and organisation issues such as maintenance of lights, fire alarms appropriate to those with hearing impairments etc.
- Increased access to and maintenance of, auxiliary aids, ICT apparatus such as computer hardware/software
- Improvement to the acoustic environment that might include installation of soundfields/hearing loop systems.
- Improvements of storage implications for wheelchairs and other mobility devices.
- Application and progress on capital funding for major access works funded through the County Council, and details on schools' funds delegation to support targets such as provision of suitable floor coverings, furniture and layout of playgrounds.

The school will take account of the needs of the pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of school premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings.

In particular:

- Staff will be made aware of children's needs, as accessibility will form part of each child's EHCP.
- Staff will be updated on disability equality issues periodically in staff meetings/INSET
- Consideration of accessibility will form part of any plans to improve, alter or enlarge the buildings or outside areas.
- All disabled pupils will have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan and staff made aware of their responsibilities.
- If visually impaired children are admitted to the school, lighting and colour contrasts will be reviewed.
- Where our school procedures present a problem in the future (through reasons related to disability), we will have individual meetings with parents as necessary in order to arrive at solutions which do not compromise on health and safety.

### **c) Provision of Information**

Schools are expected to increase access to information to those with disabilities. The Governing Body will decide how this is to be achieved by:

- Informing readers that school published material is available in a selection of formats 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 text books and other pupil information are selected and provided to meet the diversity of pupil need.
- Ensuring the monitoring and effectiveness of adult support to enhance the opportunities for pupils/parents who have difficulties in accessing information.
- Identifying the training needs of staff in accessible formats of information provision.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The named person in our school who is responsible for this plan is the SENCo. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this plan is implemented and to ensure that it is fair and equal to all.

It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to monitor the success of this Plan by ensuring that the priority areas are addressed by them in the classroom, particularly with regard to the provision of information and curriculum access.

Our Accessibility Plan and any updates will be shared with all staff.