

Fitzharrys School Accessibility Policy and Plan

Date of Plan: January 2024

Governor review/approval:

Date of next informal review/update: January 2025

Date of next statutory review: January 2026

Plan originator: PA Wileman

The Policy and Plan are drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Equality Act 2010 to prevent discrimination against disabled people in their access to education. This places key duties on schools, which are:

1. not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education benefits, facilities, and services.
2. not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
3. to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage and to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils; and
4. to publish an Accessibility Plan for schools within Ridgeway Education Trust (RET) every two years (see Appendix A). The SEN Code of Practice 2014 states that schools must publish accessibility plans setting out how they plan to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information.

Definition of disability

Disability is defined within the Equality Act 2010 as follows: "A person has a disability 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 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 disability provisions in the Equality Act are different from those of other protected characteristics. Rather than just treating a person with a disability equally with those without a disability, there are times when they should be treated more favourably to be able to benefit from what we offer to the same extent as a person without a disability. We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that members of our community with a disability are fully included in our school. The group Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all pupils with SEN and those with long-term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of equality legislation. This is in addition to all pupils with long-term impairments that have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities. We understand that the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is different from the eligibility for special educational needs provision. This means that disabled pupils may or may not have special educational needs.

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School Accessibility Overview:

At Fitzharrys School, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for all members of our school community, including students, staff, parents, and visitors. We believe that every individual, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, deserves equal opportunities to access education, facilities, and resources without any barriers. Our commitment to accessibility and inclusion is rooted in the belief that diversity enriches our learning community, making it stronger, more vibrant, and reflective of the world we live in.

Purpose of the Accessibility Plan:

The purpose of our accessibility plan is to proactively identify, remove, and prevent barriers to access and participation within our school. By creating an inclusive environment, we aim to empower all students to achieve their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally. Our plan is designed to ensure that everyone, including those with disabilities, can fully engage in the educational experience, extracurricular activities, events, and facilities provided by the school.

Goals of the Accessibility Plan:

1. Physical Accessibility:

To ensure the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments are taken into account when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site, premises and facilities, such as appropriate access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings.

2. Inclusive Curriculum and Teaching Practices:

To provide all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils.

To seek the advice and guidance of external services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEN inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

To be particularly alert to any needs arising from requirements of newly-enrolling pupils to Year 7 and Year 12 each year, as well as in-year entrants where accessibility issues may arise. Likewise, all pupils facing potential exclusion will be treated fairly following the school's Exclusion Policy.

To provide all pupils new to the school, irrespective of year group, with a relevant induction process. If it is deemed appropriate, tutor/teaching groups will be briefed as to how they can/should respond positively to a newcomer with a disability. This will always be carried out sensitively following consultation and approval from the incoming pupil/parents. Work in PSHE delivers information to help all pupils in their understanding of the needs of everyone in our school community.

To ensure appropriate data for all pupils is analysed at least 2 times each year.

To seek alternative arrangements in the case of on-site facilities not being accessible for any pupil.

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To collect views of pupils and parents regularly. All new parents and families to the school are made aware of the individual school's physical accessibility, as appropriate, and individual family needs are recorded. The School Councils are also asked to feed back their views.

3. Accessible Communication:

To be aware of local services, including those provided through the Local Authority, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested, whether this be in respect of pupils, the curriculum and learning environment, or for visitors and users of the school premises.

To ensure no discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, marital status or disability in the recruitment and selection process. The aims of the recruitment and selection process will be to ensure that equality of opportunity is considered as an integral part of recruitment practice, thus encouraging diversity by reducing unnecessary barriers. Adjustments to enable disabled candidates to meet the requirements of the post will be considered.

To ensure meetings of the individual school's Local Governing Body are accessible to all. The body includes the correct quota of parent representatives, and their contact details are published in school documentation. When vacancies arise, the position is open to all eligible parties and a fair election is held.

4. Professional Development and Training:

To equip staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver a curriculum which is differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils which includes:

- o setting suitable learning challenges;
- o responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- o overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

5. Inclusive Extracurricular Activities and Events:

To ensure that all school events, activities, and facilities are accessible and inclusive.

By setting these goals and implementing corresponding actions, we are committed to creating an inclusive, accessible, and supportive learning environment where every student can succeed and thrive. Through our collective efforts, we aim to make Fitzharrys School a model of inclusivity, celebrating diversity and embracing the unique strengths of every individual in our community.

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Outcomes	Actions	Who and when?	Review date
1. Physical Accessibility			
Remove physical barriers within the school premises to create a universally accessible environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Some of the surfaces around the site are uneven or potholed – schedule of repairs for this. (b) Personal emergency evacuation plans in place as necessary for students/staff. (c) Stairs only access to upstairs areas – continue to re-timetable classes to ground floor rooms when class includes a student who is unable to use the stairs. 	<p>Headteacher Ongoing</p> <p>SENCO/DH Inclusion</p> <p>Headteacher and senior middle leader</p>	
2. Inclusive Curriculum and Teaching Practices			
Implement teaching methods that cater to diverse learning styles and abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Provide professional development for teachers on differentiated instruction, use of assistive technologies, and inclusive classroom practices. Ensure the availability of diverse learning materials to support varied learning needs. (b) Continue with the upgrade of classroom projectors to enable access to teaching by those with visual impairment. (c) Refurbishment of blinds in classrooms to improve lighting. 	<p>DH Inclusion/SENCO/Ass Head TL Ongoing</p> <p>Headteacher and senior middle leader</p> <p>Headteacher and site manager</p>	
Improve access to the curriculum – ensure the curriculum is adapted to meet individual needs.	(a) Up-to-date pupil profiles available on Provision Map along with sharing of updating learning plans for students on the SEND register - available for planning and delivery of quality first teaching within the classroom	DH Inclusion/SENCO/Ass Head Curriculum Ongoing	

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	<p>(b) Evaluation of curriculum offer on year-by-year basis for each year group depending on the needs of the cohort through QA processes.</p> <p>(c) Development of FitzFlex internal alternative provision programme to support learners who may be reintegrating to education.</p> <p>(d) Literacy Interventions</p> <p>(e) In-class support from the TA team</p> <p>(f) Policy and provision (exam concessions) in place to meet the needs of learners in assessments/examinations.</p>		
3. Accessible Communication			
<p>Ensure that all communications, both internal and external, are accessible to individuals with disabilities.</p>	<p>(a) Provide training for staff on creating accessible digital content.</p> <p>(b) Offer alternative formats for written materials upon request.</p> <p>(c) Ensure information is accessible online and in paper formats where appropriate.</p> <p>(d) Regularly review and update the school's website and online platforms for accessibility.</p> <p>(e) Support given to families who are unable to use online booking forms etc. due to difficulties with accessing technology</p>	<p>Headteacher and marketing lead.</p>	
4. Professional Development and Training			
<p>Equip staff and faculty with the knowledge and skills necessary to support students with diverse needs through a programme of staff support/training.</p>	<p>(a) Offer training around specific pupils, key strategies to support them and how to meet their needs.</p> <p>(b) Offer training around specific needs and how adaptive teaching methods within</p>	<p>DH Inclusion/SENCO/Ass Head TL Ongoing</p>	

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	<p>the classroom can ensure pupils make at least expected progress.</p> <p>(c) Coaching observations to include advice on inclusive ways to support need.</p> <p>(d) External training from experts, e.g. SENSS Communication and Interaction team around Neurodiversity and medical teams to ensure understanding around students' diagnoses and medical needs.</p>		
<p>5. Inclusive Extracurricular Activities and Events</p>			
<p>Ensure that all school events, activities, and facilities are accessible and inclusive.</p>	<p>(a) Ensure that all in/out-of-school activities are planned with accessibility in mind, to allow for the participation of all pupils.</p> <p>(b) Ensure trip approval documentation and risk assessments consider access for all. Trip lead and SENCO to ensure that all considerations have been made.</p>	<p>Staff/EVC/SENCO Ongoing</p>	