

CHALTON LOWER SCHOOL DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

(December 2017 to December 2020)

Working with Central Bedfordshire Council, Chalton Lower School is required to produce an accessibility policy and plan.

The accessibility plan is required for:

- Increasing access for disabled pupils to the curriculum
- Improving access to the school's physical environment
- Improving written information for disabled pupils

There are three main duties:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- To prepare an accessibility strategy (Education Service) and accessibility plans (schools) for increasing the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils.

We need to consider the requirements of current and future disabled pupils. The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the school.

Legal Background

The Disability Discrimination Act – DDA, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, requires all schools and LAs to plan to increase, over time, accessibility to schools for disabled pupils. Schools are required to produce plans for their individual school and LAs are required to prepare accessibility strategies covering the maintained schools in their areas.

Chalton Lower School and the LA are required to plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled pupils to the curriculum
- Improving access to the school's physical environment (buildings and school grounds)
- Improving written information for disabled pupils

At a legislative level there are three main strands for disabled pupils:

- The SEN Framework (the Education Act 1996 and the SEN and Disability Act 2001)
- The Disability Discrimination Duties (Sections 28A 28C of the DDA 1995)
- The planning duties (Section 28D 28E of the DDA 1995)

The SEN Framework is designed to meet the special educational needs of individual children, some of whom may be disabled, who need provision that is additional to, or different from, what is normally available in schools maintained by the LA. In general, children with statements must be educated in a mainstream school unless the

parents do not want this or it will affect the provision of efficient education for other children.

School must demonstrate that there are no reasonable steps they could take to prevent this happening.

The SEN and Disability Act (2001) amended Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) by introducing new duties on LAs and schools relating to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. From September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and LEAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions policies, education and associated services.

There are three main duties:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- To prepare accessibility strategies (LAs) and accessibility plans (schools) for increasing, over time, the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils (the 'planning duty').

Please note that these duties are all 'anticipatory'; Chalton Lower School needs to consider the requirements of current and future disabled pupils. This means that schools are expected to make reasonable enquiries to find out whether children currently on roll, as well as those seeking admission, have a disability.

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the school.

In deciding whether a step is reasonable, schools may take into account the need to maintain;

- Academic standards
- Available resources
- The practicalities of making a particular adjustment
- The health and safety of the disabled pupils and others and the interests of others

However, it is the view of both the DfES and the Disability Rights Commission that, where schools have already developed inclusive cultures and practices, these legal duties should mean little extra work.

Definition of Disability

Pupils falling within the definition of disabled will have a wide range of needs and requirements including: mobility impairment, sensory impairment, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, AIDS, asthma and progressive/degenerative conditions.

Schools must not automatically consider pupils with a disability to have special educational needs, as can be seen below.

Disability

The DDA definition states that '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'.

Special Educational Needs

The Education Act 1996 states that 'children have a special educational need if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them'. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- Have a disability which prevents, or hinders, them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LA
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the above definitions, or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

For the purpose of the DDA 1995 schools and LAs are required to consider the needs of pupils in relation to physical adaptations, curriculum access and auxiliary aids and services. These areas also fall within the scope of the SEN Framework. LAs and school will continue to consider pupils' needs, particularly in relation to auxiliary aids and services, within the SEN Code of Practice context.

We will always consider access issues when planning any work involving the alteration or improvement of school premises. We will make every effort to improve access for disabled people with funding sources linked to ensure the maximum benefit.

Disability Access Plan

The aim of this plan is to set out how Chalton Lower School intends to increase the accessibility of all activities and facilities to disabled pupils over time.

At Chalton Lower School we are committed to providing an inclusive environment for all pupils and support Bedford Borough Local Authority accessibility strategy.

Definition of Disability

1. "Disability". A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse affect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) uses a broad definition of these to cover all activities that occur in a school.
2. Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives. This includes pupils with ASD, ADHD and any linked with CAMHs (Child and Adolescents Mental Health.)

This document is divided into 3 sections:

Section 1: An audit of the present position using the DfES audit checklist

Section 2: Identification of the key points specifically appropriate for Chalton Lower School

Section 3: The action plan

Chalton Lower School Accessibility audit - November 2018

Section 1: How does your school deliver the curriculum?

	Yes	Partly	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?		x	
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils?		x	
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	x		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	x		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?	x		
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?	x		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?	x		
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?	x		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?		x	
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		x	
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	x		
Are there high expectations of all pupils?	x		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	x		

Section 2: Is your school designed to meet the needs of all pupils?

	Yes	Partly	No
Does the size and layout of areas - including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms, the hall, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms - allow access for all pupils?	x		
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		x	
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		x	
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		x	
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		n/a	
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?			x
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit	x		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?		x	
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?		x	

Section 3: How does your school deliver materials in other formats?

	Yes	Partly	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		x	
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?	x		
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?		x	
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	x		

Main points in our plan:

Access to the curriculum:

- The overriding principle is to provide full curricular access to all pupils who have been allocated a place at Chalton Lower School.
- The identification of barriers to participation in all areas of school life must be a priority and where necessary, adjustments should be made to the curriculum and teaching methods.
- Individual teachers are responsible for accessing the class SEN data, making appropriate use of information provided by the SENCO/Inclusion teacher and identifying probable areas within their class where pupils could experience difficulties.
- The head teacher should identify staff development needs to improve their ability to meet the needs of pupils and include these within the performance management systems.
- Links should be developed with agencies that can extend the expertise of staff and extend the learning experiences of pupils
- All staff should feel confident in their ability to deal appropriately with every pupil. They should be able to identify when a child is not suited to an activity, and have an alternative available.

Access to the physical environment

- Within the context of our grounds and building, all refurbishment and new buildings will be undertaken with the intention of improving access for disabled pupils. Consideration will be given as to whether making alterations will be part of a logical plan, and provide value for money.

- Where a risk assessment has been undertaken, relating to a pupil with a disability, subject staff should implement the recommendations within their own teaching environment.

Access to written information:

- Pupils who have difficulty accessing standard size print should have this fact identified on, or prior to admission, and this information will be given the class teacher who will become responsible providing appropriate resources for that child.
- Children working with Braille and visual equipment will be catered for through appropriate in class support, and the advice and practical support of the visual impairment team.
- Each pupil with SEN will be reviewed, with support from the SENCO, parents and other agencies where appropriate, to ensure that the pupil's needs are being met.
- The SENCO teacher will support the class teacher in ensuring that individual requirements for enhanced scripts are met.
- Staff must ensure that the specific needs of every pupil has been met by forward planning of every lesson, and the production of differentiated material to meet identified needs.
- Consideration must be given to the text presented to pupils, considering the need for simplified versions where this is appropriate.
- The use of Interactive whiteboards, projectors and TVs must be considered in the context of pupil's disabilities. Recognition must be given that some formats, whilst beneficial to many pupils, will not be appropriate for all. An alternative strategy should be sought where a child has difficulty accessing the material.

See separate access action plan.

This document will be submitted to governors for approval at the full governing body meeting on 15th November 2017

It will be reviewed in November 2020