**Accessibility Plan September 2021– September 2023**

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1 October 2010 and replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The effect of the law is the same as the previous legislation, in that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

The Department for Education (DfE) published advice for schools on the Equality Act 2010. All schools must have an accessibility plan to comply with the Act, just as they did under the DDA. The May 2014 Departmental advice states that the overriding principle of equality legislation is generally one of equal treatment - i.e. that you must treat a man as favourably as a woman. However, provisions relating to disability discrimination are different in that schools may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a person who is not disabled and may have to make changes to your practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what the school offers to the same extent that a person without that disability can. In a school setting you may be required to treat disabled pupils differently. Discrimination is also defined rather differently in relation to disability.

The Equality Act 2010 and schools advice (May 2014) places the following duties on schools around accessibility for disabled pupils:

Schools and LAs need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. These are the same duties as previously existed under the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010.

Schools must implement accessibility plans that are aimed at:

* Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
* Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
* Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

Schools will also need to have regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must regularly review them. An accessibility plan may be a freestanding document but may also be published as part of another document such as the school development plan.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: January 2015 places a duty on schools to:

* Publish accessibility plans setting out how they plan to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information
* Publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access for disabled children
* Prepare an annual SEN Report to include details of their arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to enable access to the school for disabled children and their accessibility plan showing how they plan to improve access progressively over time

The Management Committee’s Policy for SEN is equally applicable to students with physical impairment as well as students with other SEN. This Accessibility Plan concentrates on areas relating to accessibility as a result of physical impairment.

**Reasonable adjustments and when they have to be made**

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies only to disabled people; for schools the duty is summarised as follows:

* Where something a school does places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared with other pupils then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage
* Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such and aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faced in comparison to non-disabled pupils
* Schools are not subject to the requirement of reasonable adjustment duty concerned with making alterations to physical features because this is already considered as part of their planning duties

**Definition of disability – the Equality Act defines disability as follows:**

The Act defines disability as when a person has a ‘physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person’s 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 Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

Unlawful behaviour with regard to disabled pupils

Chapter 1 explains the general definitions in the Act of direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment. The rather different and more complex provisions that apply in the case of disability are set out here.

Direct discrimination

A school must not treat a disabled pupil less favourably simply because that pupil is disabled – for example by having an admission bar on disabled applicants.  
A change for schools in this Act is that there can no longer be justification for direct discrimination in any circumstances. (Under the DDA schools could justify some direct discrimination – if was a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim.) What the change means is that if a school discriminates against a person purely because of his or her disability (even if they are trying to achieve a legitimate aim) then it would be unlawful discrimination as there can be no justification for their actions.

Indirect discrimination

A school must not do something which applies to all pupils but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils only – for example having a rule that all pupils must demonstrate physical fitness levels before being admitted to the school – unless they can show that it is done for a legitimate reason, and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

Discrimination arising from disability

A school must not discriminate against a disabled pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability – for example by not allowing a disabled pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for her to get out and back. Like indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability can potentially be justified.

Harassment

A school must not harass a pupil because of his disability – for example, a teacher shouting at the pupil because the disability means that he is constantly struggling with class-work or unable to concentrate.

**Identifying Barriers to Access:[[1]](#footnote-1)**

How does the Smannell Field School deliver the curriculum?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Yes | No |
| Do you ensure that teachers and learning support assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils? | ✓ |  |
| Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils? | ✓ |  |
| Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve? | ✓ |  |
| Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity? | ✓ |  |
| Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class? | ✓ |  |
| Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities? (Where available) | ✓ |  |
| Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work? | ✓ |  |
| Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work? | ✓ |  |
| 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? | ✓ |  |
| Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities? |  | ✓ |
| Are school visits made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment? | ✓ |  |
| Are there high expectations of all pupils? | ✓ |  |
| Do staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation? | ✓ |  |

**Guidance**

Pupil Support Equal Opportunities

Is the Smannell Field School designed to meet the needs of all pupils?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Yes | No |
| Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium and outdoor sports facilities – allow access for all pupils? |  | ✓  (Library) |
| 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? |  | ✓ |

Is the Smannell Field School designed to meet the needs of all pupils?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Yes | No |
| Are the pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed? | ✓ |  |
| Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform all pupils including pupils with SEN and disability: including alarms with both visual and auditory components? |  | ✓ |
| Are non-verbal guides used to assist people to use lifts with tactile buttons? | NA | NA |
| Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit? | ✓ |  |
| Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for pupils who have autism or epilepsy? | ✓ |  |
| Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately? | ✓ |  |

**Access Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Targets | Strategies | Outcome | Timeframe | Goals achieved |
| Short Term  (IT equipment) | Provide computer technology appropriate for pupils with disabilities | To seek advice from the local authority with regards ICT provision for pupils with disabilities. | The school will seek to provide access to technology that is most appropriate to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities. |  | Appropriate equipment available when needed. |
| Short Term  (Access to library) | To address the issue of access to the library for pupils with disabilities | To ensure that access to the library *resources* can be made available on the ground floor | Access achieved. | On a need led basis. | On a need led basis. |
|  | Targets | Strategies | Outcome | Timeframe | Goals achieved |
| Short Term  (Wheelchair users) | To ensure that all pupils with disabilities can independently access the school and its resources. | The school has adapted ground floor bathroom facilities and all areas of the ground floor are accessible. There is level access into the building and out to the play areas. | The school is accessible and all areas of the curriculum can be provided on the ground floor. | Ongoing on a needs and when basis. | Ongoing on a needs and when basis |
| Short Term  (Visual and auditory alarms) | To ensure that all pupils are aware of emergency alarm signals. | Pupils with specific needs will have a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) | A PEEP is a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan. It is a bespoke 'escape plan' for individuals who may not be able to reach an ultimate place of safety unaided. | Ongoing on a needs and when basis. | Ongoing on a needs and when basis. |

1. Accessible School Summary Guidance; DfE July 2003 www.dfe.gov.uk/sen [↑](#footnote-ref-1)