

Accessibility Plan – Autumn 2022

(To be reviewed Autumn 2025)

Introduction

It is our intention to remove, as far as we can, those barriers which make it hard for students and adults with a disability to take part in the day to day life of our school and benefit from the educational experiences and services we provide.

We aim to ensure that our school is a welcoming place that understands and responds effectively to students and adults with disabilities and we recognise the importance of a review and planning procedure associated with continuous development and improvement.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a *‘physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’*

This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more students than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, local authorities and others have towards disabled students and young people:

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled students and young people;
- They must not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person’s disability;
- They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled students and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers;
- This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled students and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage;
- Schools are allowed to treat disabled students / young people more favourably than non-disabled students / young people, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments and making changes to practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what the school can offer;

- Public bodies, including academies, are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled students and young people. Public bodies also have specific duties under the public sector equality duty and must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and must prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty. Objectives must be specific and measurable.

The duties cover discrimination in the provision of services and the provision of education, including admissions and exclusions. All providers must make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices and by the provision of auxiliary aids and services.

School governing bodies and proprietors must also publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled students, the steps taken to prevent disabled students being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled students, and their accessibility plans.

An accessibility plan is a plan for, over a prescribed period—

- increasing the extent to which disabled students / young people can participate in the school's curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students / young people are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and
- improving the delivery to disabled students / young people—
 - within a reasonable time, and
 - in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents,
 of information which is provided in writing for students / young people who are not disabled.
- An accessibility plan must be in writing.
- During the period to which the plan relates, the responsible body must keep its accessibility plan under review and, if necessary, revise it.
- It is the duty of the responsible body to implement its accessibility plan.

Schools have had a duty to produce an accessibility plan since September 2002.

The Centre School's Context

We are a Special school catering for pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs for who age from 11 years to 16 years. The school comprises of 4 buildings on a site adjacent to Cottenham Village College. The buildings cover a small site and most are of one storey construction, with one building of two storey construction (lift access available in the two storey building).

In October 2022, we had 119 students with social emotional and mental health needs on roll. A number of these pupils also have additional needs.

As part of accessibility planning, we will;

- continually review the environment of the school, the way we plan, prepare and deliver curriculum and the information we provide for students / young people so that we can improve the access for both individuals and groups;
- work to provide an atmosphere where all students / young people feel safe and valued;
- promote understanding of disability and work to show positive models of people with a disability. We will avoid stereotypes and use language which emphasises the person rather than the disability.
- examine those parts of our active and extra-curricular activities which may have limited access for students / young people with a disability and see if it is possible to provide learning experiences which promote similar development of knowledge and understanding.

Access to this plan:

This plan will be made available on the school website and upon request to anyone that requests it. If you require a copy of this plan, or any other policy, in a different format, please contact the school.

Other School Policies & Documentation

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

- Equal Policy and Objectives
- Positive Handling
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Inclusion
- SEN Information Report
- Behaviour Management / Anti Bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection

The Complaints Procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

The Centre School Accessibility Plan

Target 1: To increase access to the curriculum

Objective	Strategy	Outcome	Timescale	Review
To ensure that all students have access to the physical aids which they need to access their learning.	<p>Use of Education Health Care Plans to highlight physical aids, e.g. workstations, ICT equipment which the students require to access their learning.</p> <p>Liaison with relevant professionals to ensure this information remains up to date.</p>	<p>All students in the school receive the physical aids which they require.</p> <p>Barriers to learning are minimised for every child in this respect.</p>	Ongoing	Oct 23 update: Ear defenders provided as required. One pupil supported with medical aids.
To ensure that all work is effectively scaffolded and adaptations made to meet the needs of individual students.	Teaching to ensure that students have access to challenging work through scaffolding and adaptations - deepening understanding, promoting independence and enabling students to achieve	All lessons at The Centre School are appropriately scaffolded to meet the needs of each individual child enabling pupils to access a challenging curriculum	Ongoing. (To be reviewed annually – Autumn 2023)	Oct 23 update: Regular SLT learning walks and presence in place. Curriculum teams in place. Staff training on pedagogy of teaching.
To ensure that the range of skills and experience available within The Centre School is diverse and up to date in order that the school is better able to assess and provide for student needs	<p>Current skills, training and experience are regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Training to address areas for development is sought in response to routine monitoring or in anticipation of working with a child with relevant needs.</p>	Staff are confident at identifying individual students' needs and planning to meet these. Students benefit from an enriched curriculum which targets their needs and ensures	Ongoing	Oct 23 update: Trauma Informed training for some staff; coaching for staff in place; positive handling and first aid training for all staff

	Regular INSETs make use of a range of different specialists to ensure skills are kept up to date and relevant.	that they have full access to the curriculum.		
To ensure the needs of individual students continue to be met during off site activities.	Off-site enriched learning activities are carefully planned, taking into account the needs of individual students involved. Additional support provided for individual students with identified needs in order that they can access off-site enriched learning opportunities to support their personal development and wider curricular-learning	All students will be able to benefit from the full range of learning opportunities regardless of their location.	As necessary	Oct 23 update: A range of extended curriculum options still in place - all pupils participate and all activities risk assessed
To ensure that all staff have a good awareness and understanding of all the students at The Centre School and work together to meet their needs.	Twice weekly briefings (one staff meeting and one House Team meeting) ensure that lines of communication are clear and open and as such all staff are aware of the general needs of individual pupils e.g. needs relating to communication, medical needs such as allergies. Any information that needs urgently sharing is done so by email and verbal communication. Termly Parent / Carer home visits /meetings are held as well as Annual Reviews – during which additional information can be obtained and used to inform the curriculum offer. Close links are established with external professionals working with the child to ensure their advice on supporting the child remains relevant.	The full needs of individual students are ascertained and then reviewed on a regular basis giving all professionals a clear and holistic picture of the child they are working with. Students are more likely to have needs met as a result.	Weekly House Team meetings Weekly staff briefings / meetings Termly parent home visits and Annual Review meetings. On-going informal parent meetings. Liaison with external professionals and agencies where necessary.	Oct 23 update: House Team meetings and home visits to complete 'Student Planning and Progress meetings / documents' (as part of a review process) in place. Key Workers assigned to pupils.
NB: Where access to the curriculum is not immediately possible for individual students despite the above measures, we will enter into discussion with appropriate LA representatives to devise and make reasonable adjustment to facilitate that access.				

Target 2: To increase physical access to the school

Objective	Strategy	Outcome	Timescale	Review
To ensure that all students have access to the learning areas which they need to access.	<p>Use of Education Health Care Plans to highlight physical aids, e.g. workstations, ICT equipment which the students require to access their learning.</p> <p>Liaison with relevant professionals to ensure this information remains up to date.</p>	<p>All students in the school receive the physical aids which they require.</p> <p>Barriers to learning are minimised for every child in this respect.</p>	Ongoing	Oct 23 update: Learning aids available eg. ear defenders, writing slopes, coloured overlays, manipulatives, assistive technology, wobble cushions
To ensure that all students have their medical needs met.	The Centre School's Administration of Medication Policy outlines provision for students who require prescribed medication throughout the school day.	All students receive the prescribed medication which they require.	<p>Ongoing in response to individual needs of child.</p> <p>Policy to be regularly reviewed.</p>	Oct 23 update: Policy in date (dated 2022-2024)
To ensure that the Centre School is accessible by all persons needing to use it.	<p>The Centre School currently has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled toilet. • Disabled entrance to main building as well as lift access to the classrooms in the 2 storey building (upper floor) <p>To ensure that all pupils have access to all learning activities, considering disabled access to the 2 modular buildings on the site and/or the re-deployment of rooms. To liaise with Astrea Estates team to inform building / site developments.</p>	<p>The main school building and classrooms are accessible to all, including those with disabilities.</p> <p>Pupils to have access to all learning activities through the use of accessible rooms as needed (considering the access to the modular classrooms)</p>	Ongoing maintenance of building. (Longer term objective)	Oct 23 update: Currently there are no pupil accessibility issues with the site.

NB: Where access is not immediately possible for individual applicants for places/jobs or other visitors despite the above measures, we will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access.

Target 3: To increase access to written information in the school

Objective	Strategy	Outcome	Timescale	Review
To ensure that information which is produced by The Centre School is accessible.	Adjustments such as enlarging text/pictures or changing seating arrangements made where appropriate for individual students or groups. Similar adjustments made upon request to information designed for staff, parents and/or the general public. Use of pictorial/visual cueing in classrooms and across the school to support information sharing as required	All information disseminated by The Centre School (including that within the classroom) is able to be used by its intended audience.	Ongoing and in response to individual needs of students, staff, parents or members of the general public. (Long term objective)	October 23 update: Enlarged supports / visual aids evident in use through learning walks
Look at alternative ways of providing information – eg audio versions for people with visual impairments or signing / communication support (as needed)	Seek advice from external agencies, the Trust Inclusion team and the Local Authority Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired Services for advice and strategies to support communication as required.	Relevant school information is stored in different formats and is therefore accessible to all those wishing to use it (as required)	Ongoing process as needed <i>(Aut 22: No HI/VI pupils at present)</i>	October 23 update: Currently no accessibility issues to information. The school does support some parents with literacy difficulties through home visits and 1:1 support.
It ensures all signage around the school is clear and able to be used by all staff, students and visitors to our school.	Plan to ensure all signs are suitable for all those using our school.	All signage at The Centre School is informative, attractive and accessible to all those wishing to use it.	Before next review date.	October 23 update: Constant reviews underway and updates made in a timely manner

NB: Where access to written information is not immediately possible despite the above measures, we will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments or to put in place training programmes which will facilitate that access.

How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

Schools are required to resource, implement and review their accessibility plan as necessary. This plan will be monitored and evaluated in accordance with the agreed timeframe

When was the policy adopted and reviewed?

The policy was adopted in October 2022 (reviewed Oct 2023)