



PORTFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN

Policy date	Policy review date
September 2023	September 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. The overriding principle of equalities legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However the provisions in relation to disability are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person.

There are some minor differences around disability in the new Act when compared with the previous legislation.

- The Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must be unable to carry out to meet the definition
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The fact that it must be 'reasonable' provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be justified (bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally).
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities are under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through a statement of SEND.

As in previous legislation a school/setting must not discriminate against a pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school/setting to treat a disabled pupil unfavourably. Such treatment could amount to:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from a disability
- Harassment

Direct discrimination can never be justified but a school/setting could justify indirect discrimination against a disabled pupil, and discrimination arising from a disability if the discrimination is the result of action that is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

2. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Equality Act 2010: a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment;
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial;
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Progressive conditions considered to be a disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairment are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions that are specifically excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

It should be noted that this definition is *not just regarding physical difficulties* but also covers a wider range of:

- Sensory difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Impairment resulting from, or consisting of, a mental illness

In addition there is a range of 'hidden impairments' such as:

- Dyslexia
- Speech and Language Impairments
- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Impairment does not itself mean that a pupil is disabled but rather it is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in one or more of the following areas that has to be considered:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- 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 of physical danger

3. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils:

- When something we do places a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage to other pupils, we must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;

- We will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so, and where such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage the pupil faces in comparison to his non-disabled peers.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The test is whether the adjustment is reasonable, and if it is then there can be no justification for why it is not made. We will not be expected to make adjustments that are not reasonable.

There is as yet no clarity on what may be 'reasonable' although the Code of Practice will include factors that should be taken into account. It will be for us to decide the reasonableness of adjustments based on the individual circumstances of each case. Factors to consider may include the financial or other resources available, the effectiveness of the adjustment, its effect on other pupils, health and safety requirements, and whether aids have been made available through the SEND route.

The reasonable adjustments duty is intended to complement the accessibility planning duties, and the existing SEND statement provisions, under which Local Authorities have to provide auxiliary aids and services where a statement details that provision. When a disabled pupil does not have a statement of SEND (or the statement does not provide the necessary aid) then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will fall to the school/setting.

As in the previous legislation we are not under a duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we should be planning to do so as part of our Accessibility planning.

4. AIMS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The planning duties on schools/settings and Local Authorities are the same as the duties in the previous DDA. Schools/settings are required to have an Accessibility Plan detailing how they will improve access to the physical environment, increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils, and how they will improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils. The LA is required to have an Access Strategy.

At Portfields Primary School, we have a commitment to equal opportunities for all members of the school community and our Accessibility Plan outlines our intention to remove barriers for disabled pupils and to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the different areas of the national curriculum, increase access to extra-curricular activities and the wider school curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Furthermore, under our equality duties, we intend to improve the physical environment of the school/setting to enable any disabled person (pupil, parent/carer, employees or visitor) to access facilities and services and improve the availability of accessible information to any disabled person.

This Accessibility Plan will, therefore, **begin the process of addressing the needs of disabled people** through specific targets.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

Compliance with the disability duty under the Equality Act is consistent with the school's aims and Single Equality Scheme, and the operation of the school's SEND policy.

The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates in part, to the Asset Management Plan (access section) of the School. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The

Plan will need to be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period.

We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect. Pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

5. KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of our Accessibility Plan are as follows:

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability.
- We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
- We are committed to providing all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and we endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum Framework which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
 - setting suitable learning challenges;
 - responding to a pupil's diverse learning needs;
 - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

6. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Portfields Primary School is set in the town of Newport Pagnell. Our catchment area takes in the town and surrounding areas of Milton Keynes. We have 650 pupils on roll from Years Reception to Year 6 and we facilitate a wraparound breakfast and after school provision.

The school building is predominately on one level with a few small flight of steps throughout. We have three large playgrounds to the rear of the school, a large field and forest school area. The school building has been extended and modernised over the years and there are two fully functioning lifts. There is also a ramp in the corridor connecting the two older school buildings.

We take all advice, guidance and support needed to ensure we meet the needs of children and adults with disabilities or those who require alternative access arrangements permanently or for a fixed term. The action plan ensures that:

The school draws on the expertise of external agencies to provide specialist advice and support.

The Inclusion Lead has an overview of the needs of disabled pupils.

There is appropriate deployment and training of learning support staff.

Successful practice is shared within the school.

Disabled pupils have access to all activities inside and outside the classroom and all extra-curricular activities.

6.1 The Purpose and Direction of the School's Plan: Vision and Values

Portfields Primary School we are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and ALL children are offered full access to all opportunities e.g. forest schools, sports and extra-curricular activities; we have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter.

Portfields Primary School promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, faith, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. Our school strives to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children.

6.2 Information from Pupil Data and School Audit

Portfields Primary School:

- has high ambitions for all pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life;
- is committed to identifying and then removing barriers to disabled students in all aspects of school life;
- values the individual and the contribution they make to all aspects of school life;
- will strive to ensure that its disabled pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and teaching resources so as to develop fully in their education;
- acknowledges a commitment to embrace the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement;
- will continue to focus on removing barriers in every area of the life of the school;
- is committed to embracing equal opportunities for all members of the school community.
- the School has identified that we have, as at the start of the academic year 2022/2023 = 32 regarded as disabled under the terms of the DDA. These can be grouped as hearing impaired: 2 (1) physical mobility problems (non-wheel chair users): 1, visual impairment: 1(1), ASD: 21, Epileptic: 1 diabetic: 1, Downs Syndrome: 1, other medical: 4. *(those in brackets already counted in other group)*
- our annual School Improvement Plan takes into account the needs of our diverse student population as well as the needs of its wider community.

6.3 Views of those Consulted during the development of the Plan

We will:

- consult the full governing body/SEND governor/Finance & Premises Sub-committee;
- consult staff including specifically SENDCO;

7. SCOPE OF THE PLAN

7.1 Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

We plan to increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or off-site visits. It also covers the provision of specialist **aids and equipment**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum. The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEND inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

7.2 Improving the physical environment of the school/setting to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services

- in consultation with the LA (where necessary and appropriate) investigate various improvements to the site;
- improve accessibility points to different curriculum areas;
- investigate ways of making the site more accessible to both disabled parents and adult users.

The school will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and

refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. This is required regardless of whether the school has pupils or visitors with disabilities and is preparation for a situation when they do.

7.3 Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are disabled

We will strive to:

- produce all school literature at the correct font size to help visually impaired students;
- investigate alternative ways of providing access to information, software and activities;
- investigate ways of communicating effectively with disabled parents and carers and other disabled adult users of the site.

The school plans to improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame. The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

7.4 Financial Planning and Control

The Headteacher, with the School Business Manager, together with the Finance Committee will review the financial implications of the School Accessibility Plan as part of the normal budget review process. The objective is that over time School Accessibility Plan actions will be integrated into the School Development Plan.

We will finance the plan by identifying costs and incorporating them into current and future budget commitments.

8. RELATED POLICIES

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

- Curriculum Policies
- Equality Objectives
- School Development Plan
- Governor Action Plan
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Report
- Off-Site Visits Procedures
- School Relationships and Behaviour Policy & procedures
- School Development Plan
- Complaints Procedures

PORTFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2022-2025

IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement	Date Complete
Review TA deployment	In review meetings with teaching assistants establish when they are available to support children each day that may be different to their current working hours.	Adult support is available during key times that individual children may need support i.e. lunchtimes, PE lessons, extra-curricular activities.	Termly & Ongoing	Children who need individual adult support to participate in some activities have access to this support.	Ongoing
Training for staff in the identification of and teaching children with specific disabilities and/or impairments	All staff attend appropriate training Outreach provision from external agencies	All staff are familiar with the criteria for identifying specific needs and how best to support the children and out of the classroom	Summer 23	Children with a disability or impairment successfully included in all aspects of school life	

IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost £	Responsibility	Date Complete
Furniture & Fittings	Ensure that consideration is always given to disabled accessibility when purchasing new fittings or furniture	Ongoing		Finance & Premises Sub Committee	Ongoing

IMPROVING ACCESS TO WRITTEN INFORMATION

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement	Date Complete
Written communication to parents supports their needs e.g. large print	Electronic reporting methods are explored.	The school has explored electronic reporting methods and is knowledgeable about best practice.	As appropriate	The school is able to move forward with electronic reporting to parents.	Ongoing
Survey families as to the quality of communication to seek their opinions as to how to improve	Send out survey to parents regarding quality of communication	School is more aware of the opinions of parents and act on this	Summer 24	Family opinion is surveyed and action taken appropriately	Ongoing

