

POLICY DOCUMENT

032: Accessibility Plan

Access: Restricted

Publish to: All Stakeholders

Status: Non-Statutory

Approval level: Full Governing Body

Review Responsibility	Reviewed Date	Signed off	Date of Sign Off	Frequency Of review
Full Governing Body	June 2025			3 Years

This document is to be read in conjunction with the school's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (18a) and the Inclusion and SEN Policy (20)

The **Equality Act 2010** instructs schools to draw up an Accessibility Plan. The Polygon School's Accessibility Plan demonstrates how we intend to:

- Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment to enable pupils with disabilities to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services we provide.
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities.

The purpose of the plan is to create measures to identify, remove and prevent barriers. Our accessibility plan depends upon consultation with persons with disabilities, reflects the principles of the Equality Act and needs be updated every three years.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 outlines that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities. This definition also includes sensory difficulties, learning difficulties, impairment resulting from a mental illness, dyslexia, speech and language difficulties, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder(ADHD).

All pupils at The Polygon hold Education, Health and Care plans with social, emotional or mental health difficulties as their primary need. Many have associated learning difficulties and/or physical or mental health needs. The school describes the pupil group as having complex neurodevelopmental disorders. It should be noted that while a substantial minority of pupils recognise that they have special educational needs, most do not identify themselves as being disabled.

Pupils in the school have the following special educational needs:

- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Formally assessed learning difficulties (LD)
- Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Sensory issues supported by programmes designed by an Occupational Therapist (S)
- Speech and language difficulties supported by programmes designed by a Speech and Language therapist (Sp&L)
- Specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyspraxia (SpLD)
- Diagnosed mental health illness (MI)
- Medical needs of a physical nature, which impact mobility (P)

The views and aspirations of all pupils are formally gathered annually through the Annual Review of the EHCP. This seeks to establish what is going well and also any concerns or barriers to progress from the pupil's point of view. Parents/carers have the opportunity to express their views either in writing or verbally at the review meeting. This includes the opportunity to express any concerns or queries they may have regarding their child's progress and the provision in place for them.

In addition, the school supports a student council, which it refers to for advice on planned improvements.

Target Setting days provide a forum for parents and carers to express their opinion. Target days are used to ensure the declaration of disability is required twice per year.

An audit of existing provision includes a review of the following:

- Collation of data of the individual nature of pupil disability within the school population. This is collected by asking parents to declare the disability of their child during Target review days, held twice per year.
- Curriculum access and differentiation, including the wider curriculum such as school visits, sports and leisure.
- Technical aids and equipment including ICT software.
- Levels of skills and expertise of staff.
- All methods of communication with pupils and parents including the website, newsletters, school reports, letters and texts.
- The physical environment of the school.
- An understanding of the presence of disabled adults in the school and the pattern of their participation in the life of the school.
- The priorities currently set in other plans, particularly the school improvement plan to promote accessibility for those with disabilities.
- The impact on disabled pupils, employees and volunteers of the school's policies, practices and procedures relating to e.g. anti-bullying, discipline, harassment, trips.
- Checking of personal evacuation plans written for specific individuals if required.

Classroom and building audit:

The school site at The Polygon was not designed to be fully accessible to all pupils, staff and visitors. Visitors and pupils with physical disabilities will find some restrictions on movement and the school has worked towards greater accessibility when improvements to the site have been made. The upgrades include an accessible toilet and shower room, an accessible reception area and an accessible meeting room.

However, significant investment would be required to make all parts of the building fully accessible to wheelchair users. Restrictions to funding have currently prevented investment in Braille signage, a hearing loop in reception or disability lifting equipment. Southampton city council is aware of the significant adaptations required to make the building Disability Discrimination Act compliant. A building survey conducted by the Department for Education during the course of 2022-23 culminated in a report which suggests considerable investment would be required to bring the building up to Disability Discrimination Act compliance.

Recent Developments:

- 12 large interactive smart boards were installed in 2023 to enhance the learning accessibility experience of the pupils and have recently been upgraded.
- The name of the class teacher is clearly marked on each door.
- Access arrangements are in place for examinations so that pupils are given extra time, a reader or scribe as required.
- Temporary or ongoing alternative provision is available offsite for some pupils. This might be bespoke provision around specific needs that may be SEND related that the school cannot itself provide.
- The external welcome sign is written in different languages. Where appropriate, pupils are given timetables with symbols and signs to support their understanding.
- Classrooms are optimally organised for disabled pupils within current financial restraints and further actions for future improvements have been detailed.
- Quiet room space for individual work for targeted learners is available throughout the school site and Morris House.
- The school incorporates appropriate colour schemes when refurbishing and fitting blinds on to south facing windows.
- Emergency repairs to the school access pathway and steps occurred over the summer of 2023.
- Increased diagnostic assessments for reading/processing undertaken for all pupils. Subsequent targeted interventions for relevant pupils.

Information Access:

- The school website is now overseen by David Patchell, supported by Tolga Martin and a small working group. This access plan is published on the website.
- The school can provide information in large font format and will use the translation services as required.

Our focus for the next three years:

- Further consideration to Disability Discrimination Act compliance, especially wheelchair access to parts of the building currently inaccessible. This will be positively impacted by a new stairway into the current reception area. This is currently being planned by Southampton City Council.
- All staff to be involved in a yearly audit of teaching and assessment methods, as well as evaluating resources through an inclusion lens to ensure all pupils can access the learning opportunities. This might involve sharing good practice around considering sensory needs when organising classroom spaces, building movement breaks into lessons and providing materials in a variety of different formats to suit different pupils' needs. **This is a target identified in the school's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.**
- Further promotion of the use of alternative and assistive technology.
- Further promotion of the use of total communication strategies throughout the school, e.g. speech, pictures, signing, objects of reference, writing with symbols.
- Encouragement of all pupils to have a voice in what they learn and how they learn.
- Provision of training to raise awareness of disability for staff.
- Knowing 'who' our disabled staff pupils and visitors are, is essential to the successful implementation of our Equality, Discrimination and Inclusion Policy.
- Development of a systematic approach to recording disability disclosures regarding pupils which reflects the fact that information may be picked up at any point in the school.
- Using absence management processes as a systematic approach to collecting information on existing staff who may have, or may be likely to develop, disabilities and to discuss requirements for adjustments or support.
- Ensuring that all staff who have disclosed a disability are given the opportunity to discuss their support needs with a member of the senior leadership team so that reasonable adjustments can be made.

Management, coordination and implementation:

Overall responsibility for the school's access plan lies with the governing body, but improving access for disabled pupils requires everyone at the school to understand their duties: the head and deputy head teacher, members of the senior leadership team, other teachers, classroom support assistants, the site manager, administrative staff and the governors.

This access plan will be audited and revised every three years by the senior leadership representatives from school staff and the governing body, in consultation with stakeholders.