



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

MARY ELLIOT

Policy Details			
Written by (signed, role)	Checked by (signed, role)	Date	Review due
Mr M Ball, Executive Headteacher 	Lesley Foster Chair of Governors  Teresa Tunnell  Vice Chair of Governors	February 2020	February 2022



Introduction

This plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). It draws on the guidance set out in 'Accessible Schools:' planning to increase access to schools for disabled students issued by the DCFS in July 2002.

Definition of Disability:

A person has a disability if they have "a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

(Equality Act 2010)

The Equality Act 2010 replaces the SEN and Disability Act 2001 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas.

As far as schools are concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools are all replicated in the new Act – such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single sex schools and schools of a religious character.

The three existing general and specific equality duties on schools (race, disability and gender) to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity have been combined into a single, less bureaucratic and more outcome-focused duty extending to all of the protected characteristics identified in the Act.

It is unlawful for the school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their:

- sex, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity

As a school we recognise our duty under the Equality Act (as amended by the SENDA):

- Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and the provision of education and associated services.
- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably.
- To take reasonable steps & adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage.
- To publish an Accessibility Plan.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;

- improving the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

Section Three includes a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

Vision and Values

At Mary Elliot School we are committed to ensuring that all students have equal entitlement to education and opportunities, as stated in the School's SEN and Single Equality Policies. We also acknowledge the responsibility to make adequate provision for the needs of individuals and to monitor the effectiveness of the provision. Above all we recognise we must ensure that all students reach the highest possible standards of achievement by maximising their access to the curriculum.

Through our Accessibility plan we aim to uphold the duties of the Act and fulfil the school vision of overcoming potential barriers for all our students in every area of school life, set suitable learning challenges and respond to their diverse needs.

The school understands that there are still challenges for disabled people to be fully accepted in society but through its Mission Statement of 'Preparation for Life' hopes to prepare students for their future life by developing the skills and abilities essential to independent adult living with dignity, in the way that they choose- acknowledging for many, the sheltered nature this may imply.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents.

We aim to:-

- Provide an environment where all students are accepted and valued.
- Enable students to have access to, and experience of, the whole curriculum.
- Ensure that all information is accessible to our students and their parents/carers.

All students participate fully in all aspects of school life. These opportunities include sporting and adventurous activities, art and creative work, residential trips and a broad range of accreditation routes.

Mary Elliot School has an inclusive ethos and welcomes all students and visitors to the school.

Information from Student data:

Mary Elliot School is a Walsall Local Authority Community Special School for students aged 11-19 whose special educational needs fall predominantly within the category of severe or profound learning disability.

Students have a severe learning disability; a complex profound or multiple learning disability which is a combination of a profound learning disability together with a sensory or physical disability; and our other core group of young people feature on the autistic spectrum disorder with associated learning and behavioural difficulties.

All Mary Elliot staff have experience of working with pupils with special educational needs and have access to a broad range of continuing professional development opportunities which are adapted to meet the diverse range of needs as well as targeted to meet the differing cohorts of students within the school.

We also aim to develop a culture in which disabled people feel free to disclose information about any condition or impairment they may have, and be confident that this information will be used positively by the school to make reasonable adjustments to meet their individual needs.

Premises Information:

The School buildings are newly designed to cater for students with a range of disabilities and therefore physical access around the school is very good with disabled parking bays, level access, adult and student disabled toilets, lifts and ceiling tracked hoists already in place. This does not lessen our desire to improve the curriculum, the environment generally and the ways in which we provide information to parents and the wider school community. This will be the focus of this accessibility plan.

To meet its obligations, the school will ensure that the needs of disabled staff and students are fully considered in any strategic planning for the development of the school environment.

When determining the priorities for the use of the annual Capital Grant, the school will take into account the need to make the school environment more accessible for staff and students with disability.

The school will budget annually for reasonable minor adjustments to the environment to enable a member of staff and/or a student with a disability to have access to the full teaching and learning of the school.

The school will bear in mind health and safety requirements and the interests of other students in all the above considerations.

Our ethos is clear: we value all members of our community including staff, governors and the wider community who use Mary Elliot building. Everyone has the right to be safe and secure.

Gathering Information

The designation of the school means that every student has a diagnosed learning disability of a severe or profound nature. A high proportion of students will also have additional sensory; physical or behavioural disabilities.

The requirements for access to the school premises, facilities, curriculum and associated services are then identified via information from the feeder schools/ referring authority information and observations made by Mary Elliot staff on pre-admission visits.

This information is supplemented by details from parents and Health Authority staff regarding any medical conditions, disabilities and medication and is then recorded and stored by the school. Data protection legislation will be observed in sharing this information.

Disabled staff, parents, governors, and other school users are identified through self-declaration. Data protection legislation will be observed in sharing this information.

Information about disabled staff, students, governors, parents and community users will be used to assess:

- The effect of our policies and practices on the recruitment development and retention of disabled employees:-
 - The development needs of disabled staff will be discussed with the member of staff on a regular basis.
 - Where necessary, support staff time will be allocated, relevant to the disabled member of staff's needs.
 - Wherever possible the timetable will be adjusted to reflect the needs of disabled members of staff.
 - Within the constraints of financial resources the school aims to make adjustments to the premises to enable the member of staff to teach effectively.
 - The effect of our policies and practices on the educational opportunities available to, and achievements of, all students in school:-
 - In all teaching and learning activities a full range of teaching and learning styles will be employed to ensure that no student is excluded from learning.
 - The effect of our policies and practices on the recruitment and retention of governors and their ability to take a full and active part in governors activities.
 - The effect of our policies and practices on the involvement of parents in their child's education.
 - The effect of our policies and practices on the involvement of disabled users in community activities.
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Impact Assessment

Our impact assessments will always involve someone who is involved with the designing and implementation of the policy or practice and will involve disabled people at an appropriate point.

Section Two: Making It Happen

Management, co-ordination and Implementation

- We will ensure that all staff are aware of and familiar with The Equalities Act 2010 staff meetings and training sessions.
- We will provide feedback opportunities for all staff, stakeholders and visitors in order to continually improve our provision.
- We will feed back consultation results to staff.
- The Accessibility Plan will ensure that the school's responsibilities towards disabled staff under Part 2 of the DDA and towards the general public under Part 3 of the DDA and our duties under Health and Safety, race and Human Rights.
- The School's Accessibility Plan will be presented to the Governing Body for approval along with the school's Equality Scheme and both will be available on the school's website.
- Hard and electronic copies of the Plans will also be available by request.
- The implementation of the Policy and its Action Plan will be overseen by the governing body.
- The actions from the Accessibility Plan will be taken into account when formulating the School Development Plan.
- The evaluation of the effectiveness of our scheme will be reflected in our discussions with our School Improvement Advisor and with Ofsted when the school is inspected.

Review, Revision and Reporting

Mary Elliot School's Accessibility will be reviewed each year by school leaders so that it is in line with Accessibility issues and can be up-dated on a needs basis. This also ensures that we can respond to changing populations within the school.

Annual reporting will bring together details of:-

- Information gathered during the year
- How the information was used
- Action points completed during the year and those that are on-going. Disabled people will be involved in the process and the report will be published on the school website.

Section Three: Planning for Action (Action Plan – Appendix 1)

In writing our action plan we have addressed the general duties to:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Eliminate discrimination
- Eliminate harassment
- Promote positive attitudes
- Encourage participation in public life
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Main priorities and actions

The following action plans outline what will be achieved over the next three years (2016-2019) with regards to meeting and addressing any Accessibility issues:-

- A) Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services.
- B) Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the School curriculum
- C) Improving the delivery of information that is provided to all users of the school
- D) Improving the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.

(In accordance with guidance this plan has a readability level of 12 years.)

Accessibility

Mary Elliot School will comply with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk>) and should be physically accessible to disabled students.

At Mary Elliot School the following procedures are in place to ensure that all students are able to access education:

- Regular reviews focussing on the extent to which disabled students can access the school curriculum;
- Regular reviews to improve the physical environment of the school so that the students and visitors with disabilities are able to use the premises with ease through purpose built accommodation.
- Disabled students can access education both in school and externally when on educational visits. Tail lifts are provided on minibuses in order that all students are included in educational visits.

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- Access to written information is provided to disabled students by using Communicate in Print, **MAKATON** and **PECs** in school on a daily basis and for communicating with parents via the home/school diaries.
 - Materials for learning are adapted in order to cater for individual needs during students with visual impairments (larger print), ear defenders for students with sensory needs.

The above measures for accessibility will be reviewed annually and all staff at Mary Elliot School will work actively to anticipate the needs of disabled staff and students and will ensure the inclusion of all students by making reasonable adjustments.

The following will be considered when making decisions in relation to reasonable adjustments and whether they can be met:

- How effective the change will be in assisting the disabled person – its practicality
- The cost
- The resources and size of school
- The availability of any financial support and,
- Any safety issues

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, inducing the Disability Discrimination Act. The effect of the law is in the same as in the past, meaning that ***“schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against students because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation”***.

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

Appendix 1

Accessibility Development Plan (As required by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 and with reference to the Equalities Act 2010)

We aim to address the three areas of improving access to

- The physical environment
- Access to the curriculum
- Access to information usually provided in written form

Physical Environment

What	Why	When	Resources	Notes / Completion
Reorganisation of classroom locations, bringing PMLD classes to the ground floor	Health and Safety of building users	2020	LA financial support SLT logistical support	2020 - LA are engaged in project scoping
Improve access and security of entrance (enclosed 'holding area' near reception, and electric gates for vehicular access)	Health and Safety of building users. Logistical improvement	2020-21 financial year	Significant financial investment	Quotations are restrictive currently, saving scheme implemented. LA also asked for support.
Improve outdoor opportunities / facilities for PMLD students, both in school and off site.	Ensuring equality of opportunity and access to broad range of activities.	Ongoing	School leaders, middle leaders formulating ideas. Possible fundraising focus.	

Access to the Curriculum

What	Why	When	Resources	Notes / Completion
Increase specialist support for the curriculum	To enhance the impact of the curriculum and ensure equality of broad curriculum opportunity	Ongoing	Investment in CPD of staff Sourcing excellent agencies to	SALT Intervenors Play Therapy Pet Therapy
Ensure appropriate deployment of staff, and identifying possible gaps in structure	To maximise the impact of the skill base within the staff, contributing to curriculum implementation	Ongoing	Potential new posts in staffing structure	Under consideration: personal care team to relieve pressures on learning support.
Make appropriate adjustments to ICT equipment to enable improved access and availability	To ensure the school is in line with modern ICT developments, supporting learning activities	Ongoing	ICT Technician to have a schedule for upgrading, and suggesting new technology Leaders to be aware of technology and potential new tech available.	Upgrading hardware and software accordingly

Access to information

What	Why	When	Resources	Notes / Completion
Introduce alternative/more efficient methods of communication with parents/ stakeholders.	All stakeholders able to fully access information. To give parents more option	Ongoing	SLT to form decision around communications ICT Technician to commit time to reviewing access and improving information outlets.	New communication methods established and in regular use (text alerts, email & website information) Regularly updated website
Seek advice from outside agencies when necessary in providing, for example, visual timetables for pupils, PECS, Makaton etc	Ensure that all communication methods are considered, and that staff can implement them effectively	Ongoing	Staff training and development,	New technology to be considered in improving aspects of this.