



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2026 – 2029

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REVIEW SHEET

The information in the table below details earlier versions of this document with a brief description of each review and how to distinguish amendments made since the previous version date (if any).

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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 several 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 must not discriminate against a pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school 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 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

Under the 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.

It should be noted that this definition is *not just regarding physical difficulties* but also covers a wide 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

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.

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 that the pupil faces in comparison to their 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.

The Act does not set out what would be a reasonable adjustment or a list of factors to consider in determining what is reasonable, however, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) provides further guidance in its publication [EHRC Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils](#). 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 are required 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.

Under the Equality Act we do not have a duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we should be planning to do so as part of our accessibility planning.

4. Public sector equality duty (PSED)

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (section 149 of the Equality Act) came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty applies to public bodies (including schools) and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs.

The PSED is supported by specific duties, set out in regulations which came into force on 10 September 2011. The specific duties require public bodies to

- publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty at least annually; and
- set and publish measurable equality objectives, at least every four years.

All information must be published in a way which makes it easy for people to access it and the published information must show that the public body had due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

These are generally described as the three aims of the Equality Duty. Our accessibility plan has been developed to help us to effectively meet our obligations under the PSED and ensure that users of our service who have a disability are not disadvantaged when accessing our curriculum, physical environment or the information which we provide.

5. Aims of the accessibility plan

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.

In Sandgate 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 schools/settings 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.

This Accessibility Plan will, therefore, **begin the process of addressing the needs of disabled people** through specific targets. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates, in part, to the Asset Management Plan (access section) of the School, which is undertaken regularly by the Local Authority. 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 be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period.

6. 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 ([Click here to access](#)) 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.

7. Contextual information

Sandgate School is a community special school located in Kendal, Cumbria, within the Westmorland and Furness local authority area. Kendal is a market town with access to a wide range of local services including healthcare, public transport, leisure facilities and other educational settings, and the school benefits from links with nearby schools and community organisations. Sandgate School provides specialist education for children and young people aged 3–19 with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities, including complex learning needs, autism spectrum conditions, communication difficulties and physical disabilities. The school community reflects a broad range of abilities and backgrounds, with a strong emphasis on inclusion, individualised support and partnership working with families and external agencies.

8. Development of the plan

8.1 Vision and values

Achievement for all and to fulfil this through developing every child's personality abilities and talents to the full, to be the best that they can be.

Our School:

- Has high ambitions for its disabled pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life.
- Is committed to identifying and then removing barriers to 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 pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and teaching resources 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.

8.2 Information from pupil data and school audit

Key starting points for the school's plan:

- All students within Sandgate school have either Severe or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties with a range additional needs and diagnosis - such as Autism, ADHD, Downs Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, visual impairments and hearing impaired.
- Our annual development plan considers the needs of our diverse student population as well as the needs of its wider community.
- Annually students currently in feeder nursery/primary schools who may wish to come here have been identified through dialogue with the Local Authority agencies tasked with supporting those students in its area with disabilities.

To ensure that our data is up to date and accurate we will:

- liaise with the Local Authority to identify and therefore plan a response to students and their needs well before they arrive;
- improve the information dissemination from our Learning Support facility;
- implement a system that allows parents to inform us if they themselves have a disability;
- identify early on in their school career any obstacles to the effective learning of students;
- use all available data to inform the planning of individual student learning patterns;
- use information supplied via previous LA Asset Management/Accessibility Audits to assist us to develop an action plan to reduce obstacles for the school community.

8.3 Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

We will:

- ensure the development of the plan involves coordination with the Local Authority in line with the LA Accessibility Strategy and ensure that we provide the best choices for students wanting to enrol here;
- consult the full governing body/SEND governor/relevant sub-committee;
- consult staff including specifically SENCo, heads of year/departments, safety committee;

- set up a structure to allow the views of students, both able and disabled to be considered;
- survey parents/carers to ascertain their views on our provision for students and any developments they feel would be of use to the students and also offer parents alternative ways of answering the survey;
- involve outside agencies who already exist to assist students in their education and future careers;
- ensure the views of ALL those consulted are taken into consideration and the plan modified where reasonable to meet the needs of stakeholders;

9. Scope of the plan

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

- To investigate how the access to those areas of the curriculum that are normally difficult for students to access can be improved;
- To further investigate what support or alternative approaches can be adopted to increase the choice/participation of students;
- To investigate alternative provision/routes and collaboration that will assist students to learn including liaison with the LA Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Statementing and Provision Team.

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.

9.2 Improving the school's physical environment 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.

Physical aids to access education cover things such as ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept keyboards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills, such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils.

In maintained schools the provision of a special piece of equipment or extra assistance will generally be made through the SEND framework and to a lesser extent through the planning duty which applies to all schools. The distinction between auxiliary aids and services provided through the SEND route and those provided under the planning duty is that the SEND duties relate to the individual, whereas the planning duty relates to the provision of aids or services in terms of the population (and future population) of the school. For example, a pupil with visual impairment might have low vision aids provided through the statement of SEND but the school might as a general measure provide blinds and adjustable lighting and colour distinction through the planning duty.

The Governing body will consider and record reflection upon all areas of the physical environment such as:

- Changes to improve access to doors, stairs, toilet, changing facilities, and consideration of the impact of signs, colour schemes and colour contrast, lighting, heating etc.
- Changes outside of the school building e.g. provision of disabled parking etc.
- Management and organisation issues such as maintenance of lights, fire alarms appropriate to those with hearing impairments etc.
- Increased access to and maintenance of, auxiliary aids, ICT apparatus such as computer hardware/software.
- Improvement to the acoustic environment that might include installation of sound fields/hearing loop systems.
- Provision of sensory areas and / or quiet spaces for neurodivergent pupils and those with mental health issues such as anxiety disorders.
- Improvements of storage implications for wheelchairs and other mobility devices.
- Application and progress on capital funding for major access works funded by the Schools Access Initiative through the Local Authority, and details on school funds delegation to

support targets such as provision of suitable floor coverings, furniture and layout of the playgrounds.

9.3 Improving delivery of information that is provided in writing for disabled pupils

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 a
- 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 include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information will 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.

The Headteacher will prepare an information plan consistent with the aims and objectives of the accessibility plan and who will monitor the plan and report on it to governors.

This part of the duty covers planning to make information normally provided by the school in writing to its pupils – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to all. This will include alternative formats such as Braille, audio tape and large print and also the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or sign language, through a recognised symbol system or ICT. This information should also be made available within a reasonable time frame and take account of the pupils' disabilities and pupils' and parents' preferred formats.

We will achieve this by:

- Informing readers that school published material is available in a selection of formats e.g. Braille, Makaton, audio tapes and identifying how they can access this provision if requested.
- Considering how to increase information accessibility for those who have English as an additional language or other communication impairments, at school meetings etc.

- Identifying how we have considered the readability of information including that provided by the school website, and how it is monitored to ensure accessibility to a wide range of diverse needs and abilities.
- Identifying how textbooks and other pupil information are selected and provided to meet a diversity of pupil needs.
- Ensuring the monitoring of effectiveness of adult support to enhance the opportunities for pupils/parents who have difficulties in accessing information.

9.4 Financial planning and control

The Head teacher with Senior Management Team, 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.

10. Implementation

10.1 Management, coordination and implementation

Our Leadership Team will undertake a disability audit using a cross section of staff, pupils and parents (refer to Section 7.3).

As a result of the audit, we shall:

- produce action plans, with definite time scales for the implementation of the actions implicit in the plan;
- plan to provide workshops so staff can understand and buy into the Accessibility Plan and not see it as a bolt on;
- present the plan to the governing body for their approval;
- modify the plan based on the views of stakeholders;
- review the plan and the associated action plans to see if milestones are being met. This plan will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary every three years.

10.2 Monitoring

We recognise that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning.

Governors will be required to comment in their annual report to parents on the accessibility plan and identify any revisions as necessary, such as:

- success in meeting identified targets;
- changes in physical accessibility of school buildings;
- questionnaires, responses from stakeholders e.g. parents, pupils and staff, indicate increased confidence in the school's/setting's ability to promote access to educational opportunities for pupils with disabilities;
- improved levels of confidence in staff in reducing the obstacles to success for pupils with additional needs;
- increased levels of achievement for pupils;
- pupil responses; verbally, pictorially and written that indicate that they feel themselves to be included;

10.3 The role of the LA in increasing accessibility

The LA has:

- provided training and awareness opportunities on issues regarding inclusion to staff, governors and parents and how this has been used in school to promote inclusion e.g. uptake of Dyslexia Friendly status, Inclusion Quality Mark, attendance on courses, use and adaptation of LA provided information, etc.;
- promoted collaboration through the provision of information aimed at sharing good practice;
- encouraged liaison between special and mainstream schools to share expertise and pupil placement;
- ensured that schools/settings are aware of support services that provide advice to schools/settings and staff;
- provided specialist help to identify ways forward in increasing the inclusion of all pupils;
- linked building adaptations to refurbishment and capital building works;
- informed schools/settings how information can be provided in a number of different formats.

10.4 Accessing the school's plan

We will ensure that the plan is available in different formats where requested.

The school will achieve successful implementation of the accessibility plan with continued support in the areas of:

- providing training and awareness opportunities to staff, Governors and parents/carers on issues regarding equality and inclusion;

- providing targeted training for particular groups of pupils/staff;
- promoting collaboration through the provision of information and the sharing of good practice;
- encouraging liaison between other local schools/settings;
- seeking support/advice from outside the school, from services, other agencies and organisations;
- ensuring that the school is aware of all support services that provide advice to schools/settings and staff.

11. Related policies

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

- Curriculum details
- Equality Policy, Action Plan and Objectives
- Staff Training and Development Plan
- Governor Training Plan
- Health & Safety Policy and procedures
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy, Local Offer Response and Information Report
- Off-Site Visits Procedures
- School Behaviour Policy & procedures
- School Development Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Complaints Procedure

SANDGATE SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2026 – 2029

IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement	Date Complete
both in and out of school- ICT, effective learning environments and participation in activities	- Continue to review accessibility of ICT - Involve pupils in review of hard & software - Prioritise new software to purchase. - Continue to train staff in CPD time on use of Communicate in Print/Symwriter and other accessible ICT. - Review of existing specialist ICT equipment	Access to curriculum	3 years	Inclusive education for those who may not be able to communicate verbally or using written implements	
Ongoing program of staff training in disability awareness to reflect diverse needs of students within the school and anticipatory duties.	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 these children in the classroom.	ongoing	Children are successfully included in all aspects of school life.	Ongoing
Awareness Raising of Disability Issues	Seek issues and feedback from Student Voice groups	Whole school community aware of issues relating to Access	ongoing	Student voices are heard and taken into consideration. They can see and understand change in their environment	ongoing
All out-of-school and extra-curricular activities are planned to ensure the participation of the whole range of pupils	Students are charged an equal amount per trip for educational visits regardless of use of resource on trip.	All out-of-school and extra-curricular activities will be conducted in an inclusive environment with providers that comply with all current and future legislative requirements	As visits happen	Equal opportunities for all children	Ongoing
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.	Reviewed Annually, or with new staff/pupils	Children who need individual adult support to participate in some activities have access to this support.	ongoing

SANDGATE SCHOOL					
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IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT					
Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost £	Responsibility	Date Complete
New build protect	Work with the architects and Seek advice from SEN service to assist with design of space and provision of appropriate equipment to bring about the most accessible New Build project on upper school site.				
Classroom organisation	Classrooms are optimally organised to promote the participation and independence of all pupils	ongoing	Free	Class teachers	Ongoing
Improve facilities	Counters is lowered to a maximum height of 800mm, with knee-space under.	3 years or as and when need replaced	TBC		
Fire and emergency evacuation procedures to be in place for those with additional needs.	- Regular training for staff in the use of evac chairs. - Need to regularly review the escape strategy, management controls and staff training needed as appropriate. - PEEPs to be developed for all pupils with additional needs including those using wheelchairs, those with mobility difficulties and hearing/visual impairments. - General Emergency Evacuation Plans (GEEPs) to include any visitors with additional needs. - Sign to be displayed at reception informing visitors that a scheme of assisted evacuation can be offered.	At least annually or when new pupils join		Fire Warden, alongside class teachers	Ongoing
Improving the visual environment for pupils with visual impairments.	Incorporation of appropriate colour schemes when renewing displays – seek advice from co-workers and relevant pupils on appropriate colour schemes.	termly	N/A	Class teachers	Ongoing

SANDGATE SCHOOL					
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IMPROVING ACCESS TO WRITTEN INFORMATION					
Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement	Date Complete
Availability of written material in alternative formats	Use large print and audio formats etc as required.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes	Ongoing	Delivery of information improved	Ongoing
Make available school brochures, school newsletters and other information for parents in alternative formats	Review accessibility of newsletter and letters for parents.	All school information available for all	Upon each publication	Delivery of school information to parents and the local community improved	Ongoing
The school moves towards an electronic method of reporting to parents.	Use and monitor the effectiveness of Parentmail for all.	The school has explored electronic reporting methods and is knowledgeable about best practice.	3 years	The school is able to move forward with electronic reporting to parents.	
Raise the awareness of adults working at and for the school on the importance of good communications systems.	Use Communicate in Print/Symwriter and other symbolised software packages and Arrange training courses.	Develop the use of symbols to a standard use	Ongoing	School is more effective in meeting the needs of pupils.	Ongoing
Survey parents/carers as to the quality of communication to seek their opinions as to how to improve.	Surveys, letters and verbal feedback from parents and carers	School is more aware of the opinions of parents and acts on this.	3 years	Parental opinion is surveyed and action taken appropriately.	