

Church Lawton School

Access Plan Policy

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Agreed by Governors:	Ratified May 2016
Reviewed:	November 2017
Reviewed:	December 2019
Reviewed:	December 2020
Reviewed:	December 2021
Reviewed:	December 2022
Reviewed:	December 2023
Next review date:	December 2024

Aims

Our school's accessibility plans are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum
- Ensuring the physical environment of the school enables pupils, staff and other school users who have a disability to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

We recognise the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and will regularly review them.

1. Improving access to the physical environment of schools

"This includes improvements to the environment of the school, which can include visual, acoustic and physical environments. All new school buildings have to comply with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and should be physically accessible to disabled pupils. Much of the work in the area of improving the physical environment will therefore involve improving access to existing buildings."

Church Lawton School is a new build and as such complies with relevant building regulations. In many cases, because it has been designed specifically for pupils whose needs lie on the autism spectrum and because specialist advice has been sought, it exceeds the minimum standards required. Its interior design has been chosen to minimise visual and tactile disturbances for people with sensory processing difficulties, with consideration having been given to surfaces, textures, finishes and colour. Its mechanical and engineering specification ensures the highest possible acoustic standards and best possible lighting scheme within the given budget.

To meet the needs of pupils with high levels of challenging behaviour the physical design of the building allows for small, calming environments throughout the school. Facilities have been provided that will allow pupils to develop their independent living skills. Specialist, strong, furniture will be provided for those who need it. The school has been designed to be as safe and secure as possible.

2. Increasing access for disabled pupils to the curriculum

Access to the curriculum covers not only teaching and learning, but also the wider curriculum such as after-school activities, community-based learning, sporting and cultural activities, school visits and inclusion programmes.

As an autism specialist school our curriculum is completely focused on meeting the individual needs of each one of our pupils. Staff have an additional five training days a year that focus upon autism awareness and our autism specific curriculum. Every pupil has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) to help them overcome their barriers to learning, increase their curriculum access and support them to make expected progress or better.

Our rigorous assessment tracking ensures that plans are reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure these aims are met. Where learning activities are not appropriate for someone because of their disability a suitable and relevant alternative will be found.

3. Improving the delivery of written information to disabled pupils

“This covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its pupils accessible to disabled pupils. Information should take account of pupils’ disabilities and parents’ preferred formats and should be made available within a reasonable timescale.”

In an autism specific school written information is always adapted to best meet the individual needs of pupils. This may involve changing the colour on which materials are presented, use of ICT, symbolic representation or even the use of objects of reference for those with the most complex needs. If necessary, we will use auditory or video strategies to convey information to pupils.

Information to parents and other stakeholders will be conveyed in a variety of ways, e.g. by letter, email, text and telephone. Where possible we will respond to individual requests to modify our communication systems to improve accessibility.

Through information gathering we will determine the best ways of conveying written information and will regularly review and update our strategies.

This plan will be reviewed and updated annually and will continue be informed by:

- The views and aspirations of our pupils themselves.
- The views and aspirations of the families of pupils.
- The views and aspirations of other staff, stakeholders, disabled people or voluntary and external organisations.