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ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

**Document Control**

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| **This document has been approved for operation within:** | The Heights, Blackburn |
| **Date effective from** | December 2022 |
| **Date of next review** | December 2025 |
| **Review period** | 3 years |

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# Aims

Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

* Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
* Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
* Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

The Heights Free School aims to provide a new route to success for young people through a combination of Vocational and Academic options within a nurturing environment. We have the highest ambitions for all pupils with or without additional needs and disability expects them to participate fully in all aspects of school life. We are committed to equal opportunities and engaging young people with exciting and enjoyable ways to learn; providing personalised programmes and support to achieve their highest potential in education and in the future. The school sets challenging, but suitable learning goals, responds appropriately to diverse needs and strives to overcome potential barriers in every area of school life.

# Information:

The school has a good reputation for inclusive practice:

* The range of current SEND issues include: speech and communication, ADHD, ASD, moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia and physical difficulties.
* The school has good physical access and was refurbished to be DDA compliant. We have braille signage on doors, wheelchair access, disabled lifts, toilets and changing facilities and dedicated disabled parking spaces. The corridors and doorways are sufficiently wide and most of the building is carpeted. When planning for building work access for pupils with disabilities are considered. Flooring is chosen to contrast with the walls, corridors are kept free from clutter. Curriculum access is considered at planning stages by teachers.
* SEND pupils participate in all aspects of school life. We ensure that they can participate in every activity, through careful planning and risk assessments. Where necessary, additional staff are put in place to ensure full access and safety.
* The physical features of the school are a strength – all parts of the school are accessible to disabled pupils.
* Access to information is planned: for example, reasonable adjustments are made to enable learning; visual representations, text size and font colour, page layouts, ICT access, etc. are monitored to ensure maximum success. Students will also have individual support to ensure access.
* We have a clear policy on the administration of medicines, with staff trained to administer medication and use of defibrillator.
* We have a clear anti-bullying policy, drawn up in consultation with students and staff and an inclusive ethos which fosters good relationships between students.
* Outcomes for SEND students are good. We strive for all our students to make expected or better progress over time.

# Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ adverse effect on his or her ability to undertake normal day to day activities.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

# Action plan

This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

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| Aim | Actions | Person  Responsible | Timescales | Evidence that it is completed |
| Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability | Ensure appropriate deployment of support staff. | NL, LL | Ongoing | Programmes of  support. Staff lists. |
| Ensure high quality teaching through CPD for all to improve disabled pupils’ access. | LL, NL | Ongoing | SEND pupils with full access to the curriculum, working with independence when appropriate and interacting fully with peers. |
| Staff CPD related to current SEND | LL | Ongoing | CPD calendar |
| Identifying reasonable adjustments to offer  equality of opportunity | CH, LL | Annual cycle | Securing access arrangements and support for external exams. |
| Improve self-esteem in SEND pupils through school ethos, PHSCE. | LL, DT | Ongoing | SEND pupils to access full curriculum PSHCE Super Learning days |
| Audit extra-curricular activities to ensure participation of disabled students. | AB, DS | Ongoing | Evolve evidence and risk assessments |
| Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated  services | Development of Link room dedicated to Special needs | LL, GL | Ongoing | Additional resources used extensively to support small group work. |
| Improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled students | Consult with parents when necessary to provide information in the appropriate format (Initial interviews and ongoing). | LL | Ongoing | Parents/carers/ students able to fully access information. |
| Seek advice from outside agencies when necessary in providing, for example, visual timetables for students. | LL | Ongoing |
| Investigate and maintain most efficient  method of  communication with parents. (text alerts, phone calls and  email) | LL | Ongoing |

# Management, coordination and implementation

* We will ensure that all staff are aware of the disability discrimination duties through staff meetings.
* We will feedback consultation results to staff.
* The Accessibility Plan will form part of the School Improvement Plan and as such will be overseen and reviewed by the governing body and its committees.
* The governing body will monitor implementation of the plan through the Headteacher’s report, governor visits and the SEND Governor who should meet regularly with the SENDCO.
* The plan will be evaluated yearly, informed by discussions with SEND pupils, staff and parents and analysis of data on progress and attainment of SEND pupils.
* The Accessibility Plan, although forming part of the School Improvement Plan, is also available as a separate plan.
* Accessibility planning will be integrated into the school’s overarching planning processes, including premises development, curriculum planning and repairs and maintenance.
* The Accessibility Plan will be coordinated with the school’s responsibilities towards disabled staff under Health and Safety, race and Human Rights.
* Evaluation of the plan will look at what the school has implemented and what effect those measures have had. The school will consider a range of evidence to reach a judgement. These will include staff confidence in teaching SEND students, parental satisfaction with arrangements made, outcomes for students, the physical environment, multi-agency protocols, the sharing of good practice and the involvement of SEND students in school life.
* The Governing Body will report to parents on the school’s accessibility plan via the school and the school’s website. This will be linked into other reporting requirements on the arrangements for admission of disabled students, the steps taken to prevent disabled students from being treated less favourably than others and the facilities provided to assist access to the school.

# Monitoring arrangements

This document will be reviewed every **3** years but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary. It will be approved by the governing body and the Headteacher.

# Links with other policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

* Health and safety policy
* Equality opportunities for Students policy
* SEND policy and Information report
* Supporting pupils with Medical Needs policy