Rawmarsh Community School Accessibility Policy & Plan

DATE: October 2025
OWNED BY: Executive Headteacher
APPROVED BY: Estates and Compliance Subcommittee

Contents

This policy does not form part of the contract of employment and from time to time may be altered following consultation and negotiations with recognised Trade Unions. Any changes will be communicated to employees with reasonable notice. The policy may vary from time to time on a case-by-case basis in consultation and agreement with Union Representatives.

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Part A

1.   Introduction and Strategic Rationale

As a governing body, we must proactively ensure that all students, staff, and visitors, regardless of disability, have equitable access to education, facilities, and information. This is not only an ethical imperative aligned with our institutional values but also a statutory requirement under key legislation (e.g., the Equality Act 2010 in the UK, or equivalent national non-discrimination laws).

A reactive approach to individual student needs is insufficient and carries legal risk, particularly concerning disability discrimination claims. Therefore, we propose formalising a comprehensive Accessibility Policy and an accompanying three-year action plan. This will transition our organisation from compliance only to a strategic culture of inclusion and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), enhancing educational outcomes for all pupils.

2.   Aims and Scope of the Accessibility Policy

The primary purpose of the Accessibility Policy is to establish the overarching commitment and principles for ensuring non-discrimination and reasonable adjustments across the school estate.

Core Aims:

1.   Increase Participation in the Curriculum: To ensure that disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum and the broader range of educational opportunities (including extra-curricular activities, school trips, and assessments) to the same extent as their non-disabled peers.

2.   Improve the Physical Environment: To continuously improve the physical environment of all school sites, enabling disabled pupils, staff, and visitors to take full advantage of the education, benefits, facilities, and services provided.

3.   Enhance Information Delivery: To systematically improve the delivery of information that is normally provided in writing to pupils, staff, parents, and visitors, ensuring it is made available in accessible formats and within a reasonable timeframe, accounting for individual needs (e.g., large print, Braille, digital text-to-speech formats).

Scope and Monitoring:

The policy will apply to all maintained schools and academies under the Trust/MAT governance. The Board is responsible for the approval, resourcing, and annual monitoring of the associated Accessibility Plan, ensuring it aligns with our wider strategic and budgetary goals.

The policy will refer to the following legislation: The Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation, such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act, and Sex Discrimination Act.

It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools. (For further information, see the Equality and Diversity Policy.)

The Act makes it unlawful for Rawmarsh School and the school's governance committee to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to:

- Admissions
- The way we provide education for pupils
- The way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

The protected characteristics are:

- sex;
- race;
- disability;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity;

There is a still a requirement to have an accessibility plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled pupils to the physical environment, the curriculum, and written information.

The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows: -

- The definition of disability is less restrictive.
- Direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified;
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified;
- From September 2012, we are under a duty to make available auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments, where these are not being supplied through a Statement of Special Educational Needs or from other sources.

This plan sets out the proposals of Rawmarsh School and the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

A.   Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
B.   Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
C.   Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information, which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

3.   The Required Three-Year Implementation Plan

The Accessibility Plan acts as the operational roadmap for achieving the Policy's aims. It must be a living document, reviewed annually and revised fully every three years. The plan must be structured around the three statutory duties outlined above.

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Duty Focus	Key Strategic Objectives (Examples)	Deliverables & Metrics
1. Access to the Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)	Shift to Inclusive Pedagogy: Embed inclusive teaching practices (Wave 1 Quality First Teaching) and reduce reliance on segregation or auxiliary support where possible.	CPD: 100% of teaching staff trained in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles within Year 1. Resource Audit: All digital learning resources (VLE, web content) comply with WCAG 2.2 AA standards by the end of Year 3.
2. Access to the Physical Environment	Improve Mobility & Safety: Address physical barriers to entry, movement, and evacuation across all school buildings, prioritising older structures.	Audit: Complete accessibility audit (including routes, toilets, and signage) for all sites in Year 1. Action: Install visual and auditory fire alarm systems in all main halls and public areas by Year 2.
3. Access to Information	Standardise Accessible Communication: Ensure all key school documentation, including prospectuses, policies, and newsletters, is available in multiple accessible formats upon request.	System: Implement a centralised system for generating accessible communications (e.g., automated large print, screen reader-friendly PDFs) by the start of Year 2. Stakeholder Engagement: 90% satisfaction rate from disabled parents/carers on information accessibility in the annual survey.

4. Resource Allocation and Governance

Successful implementation requires designated leadership and adequate resources:

1. Lead Responsibility: The plan's implementation and accountability will be delegated to a specific Senior Leader (e.g., the Head of Inclusion or the Compliance Officer), with regular progress reports submitted to the Board.

2. Budgetary Commitment: Dedicated capital expenditure (CapEx) must be allocated over the three-year cycle to address physical environment improvements (e.g., ramps, accessible toilets, improved lighting/signage). Operational expenditure (OpEx) must fund staff training and accessible technology (assistive technology and software licenses).

3. Consultation: The plan must be developed and reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders, including the SENDCO/Inclusion Manager, Premises Manager, relevant staff, parents of disabled pupils, and the pupils themselves.

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This strategic proposal ensures that our organisation is meeting its legal obligations while establishing a world-class standard of inclusion and equity for every member of our community.

Recommendation: The Board is requested to approve the Accessibility Policy and authorise the drafting and resourcing of the detailed three-year Implementation Plan.

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PART B

School Accessibility Plan

Section 1: Vision Statement

At Rawmarsh School 'We want to send every young person into the world able and qualified to play their full part in it'.

We know that for some students extra support is required and we take great pride in our provision. Please see our Special Educational Needs Policy for further details and further information is also on our website in the SEND section.

If you have any questions at all please contact the SEND administrative team: Katy Scholfield: SEND Administrator: kscholfield@rawmarsh.org

The Disability Discrimination Act placed new duties upon schools to remove discrimination against students with disability in their access to education. It required them to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their policies, procedures and practices to accommodate students with disability more fully in school life.

This plan is in line with paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act and the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

We are happy to discuss individual access requirements and adapt our Access Plan as required so that it meets the needs of all of our children.

Section 2: Aims and objectives

Our aims are to:
- To increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum
- Improve and maintain access to the physical environment
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils and families with disabilities

The table below sets out how the school will achieve these aims.

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Aim
To increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate within a broad and balanced curriculum

Current Good Practice (Include established practice and practice under development)

- The curriculum is implemented to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of children.
- When planning work, the staff take into account the abilities and needs of all the children and provide work accordingly which is adapted to need.
- Learning objectives, teaching styles are modified and access arrangements are deployed. Suitable learning challenges, including individual education plans (IEP) are set.
- We respond to children's diverse learning needs, overcoming potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups of pupils, by accessing adult support, intervention programmes, tailored speech and language therapy programmes, using auxiliary aids effectively to ensure children and young people can be included in the curriculum e.g. visual aids, coloured layovers, pen grips, adapted physical education equipment, adapted keyboards and computer software.
- Entitlement and enrichment activities and trips are made as inclusive as possible and available to all children. Risk assessments are carried out prior to a trip and reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to ensure all children can access the enrichment opportunities fully.
- Where necessary, individual risk assessments are carried out and procedures put in place to enable all children to participate. This may require 1:1 support from a teacher or teaching assistant.
- Classroom teachers have access to individual student profiles and are trained regularly on how to support and include all students. Student Voice is gained through subject leader reviews, School Council and student leader meetings/discussions.
- Students with specific needs have the appropriate equipment and furniture in place to allow them access to their lessons.
- For children with interaction and communication difficulties we use visual timetables, Makaton and Sign Language.
- Further into the curriculum students have bespoke curriculum interviews to discuss the individual needs, ambitions and goals.

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Objectives / Next Steps To increase access to the curriculum for students with disability	Person Responsible	Date to complete actions by	Success Criteria
Literacy All staff are continually trained to employ quality first teaching strategies in the first instance in response to individual needs. All students will be screened for literacy difficulties in accuracy, fluency and comprehension, and significant difficulties will be addressed through targeted literacy intervention programmes. Support staff will be trained to deliver effective intervention The curriculum will be continually adapted in response to changing needs as informed by the Trust Director of SEND/SEND leads and Subject Leaders. All staff have the relevant training from outside agencies, where appropriate, to support the specific needs of some of our most vulnerable students.	SENCO Non-Teaching SENCO Deputy Head Workforce development Lead Data Lead	Ongoing	All students with a significant literacy difficulty will have an intervention in place. This will have a demonstrable impact on progress and attainment. Staff are confident in using suggested strategies, students benefit from an adapted and differentiated curriculum appropriate to their needs.
Physical activity and physical education All pupils will have the opportunity to play disability sport. PE curriculum will be further adapted to suit the needs of all learners. This includes accessibility of equipment and activity. Electives will be researched which are suitable for students with a disability.	Trust Directors of SEND and Trust Director of PE and Sports development manager	Ongoing	All students have the opportunity to access appropriate PA and PE activities. Pupils have appropriate equipment to access PA and PE curriculum
Providing staff with the opportunity for regular and updated training relating to additional needs, e.g. physical education staff being trained in including children and young people with disabilities in the curriculum Recommendations from OT services will be actioned.			

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Aim
To improve and maintain the physical environment

Current Good Practice (Include established practice and practice under development)

- There are 4 disabled parking bays available on school site.
- School main entrances have wheelchair access.
- The school has a disabled changing area including a height-adjusted changing bed. A hoist is available.
- The school is equipped with a disabled toilet for those students who need this and a hygiene room with shower is available
- There is level or ramped access to the main school building which is suitable for a wheelchair
- Handrails and ramps are in place around school and outside school for access into school and the use of aids such as wheelchairs and walking frames are fully integrated into school life.
- Playing fields have level or ramped access and the school has 3 hard play areas.
- The school has two lifts that provide access to all floors within the school buildings. Lifts are located in: ○ B block ○ C block ○ F block
- Students are assessed individually and therefore their provision is bespoke to them. Students who face physical challenges are supported through individual care and access plans, including Personal Emergency Evacuation plans.
- Site manager to conduct health and safety walks of the school site to identify any potential hazards with headteacher each month
- School site environment is regularly reviewed and improved to meet the needs of all students. Changes to improve access to doors, stairs, toilet, changing facilities, and consideration of the impact of signs and colour schemes are considered and updated as required.

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Objectives / Next Steps To improve and maintain the physical environment	Person Responsible	Date to complete actions by	Success Criteria
Develop personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) for specific students. Support staff informed of which students they are responsible for in an emergency situation. PEEP forms are stored with emergency evacuation register held by the SEND Lead and brought to the evacuation point.	Head Teacher SENCO	As necessary	Identified students are aware of their PEEP. Completed PEEPs in place for all identified students.
Staff are continually informed of all students with a disability and the difficulties they may face with access within certain rooms. Subject Teachers ensure that appropriate seating plans are in place to support students with a disability in their access to each room. Identify adaptations needed, including adaptations for children and young people with sensory needs When planning work, the staff take into account the abilities and needs of all the children and provide work accordingly which is adapted to physical needs.	SENCO Head Teacher	Ongoing	All identified students are seated appropriately in rooms to ensure maximum access within each room. Students with restricted mobility have lessons adapted to support needs. Students with sensory needs have lessons adapted to support needs. Calm low stimulus environments are available for pupils with sensory needs. School site environment is regularly reviewed and improved to meet the needs of all students.
Contrasting doorframes and yellow/ fluorescent warning strips on vertical posts, steps and handrails, to support students with VI will be incorporated into the buildings and premises	Premises and Compliance manager	Summer 25	All students with VI are able to navigate successfully around school safely.
All staff to be vigilant of hazards within the school and throughout the school grounds. Any identified hazards or risks must be reported to site services immediately.	All Staff	Ongoing	Ensure all potential hazards are removed in a timely manner

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Aim
Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils and families with disabilities

Current Good Practice

(Include established practice and practice under development)

- Handouts, and information given in class, are available and enlarged if requested to meet the needs of pupils with a visual impairment.
- ICT is used to display written information in different formats and with different colour backgrounds and fonts. Fonts used on the school website, are clear and appropriate background colours are used.
- Access arrangements are in place for pupils for all internal and external exams

Objectives / Next Steps Improve the delivery of information to students with a disability	Person Responsible	Date to complete actions by	Success Criteria
Ensure all staff are aware of pupil profiles to meet the needs of all students and adapt lessons accordingly. Ensure information is collated from feeder schools regarding access arrangements in a timely manner	SENCO Non-Teaching SENCO	Ongoing	Students with restricted vision and hearing can access mainstream lessons and examinations
Delivery of information regarding school events will be tailored to the needs of pupils and parents/carers with communication needs. Signposting to information, advice and guidance is effective, for example the Family Information Service, SEND Local Offer, SENDIASS and the LA will be provided for families.	SENCO Non-Teaching SENCO Headteacher	Ongoing	Students and families with restricted vision and hearing can access school events and information
Ensure that transition from setting to setting is carefully planned and personalised for children and young people with SEND.	SENCO Non-Teaching SENCO	Ongoing	All in year admissions and Y6 students with additional needs transfer successfully to school roll

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