

Middleton School



Accessibility Policy

Reviewed February 2024
Ratified by Governors March 2024
Due for Review February 2025

Accessibility Plan

1. Purpose of the Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan addresses the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice of September 2014. These acts place a responsibility on the Governing Body to ensure that the school is socially and academically inclusive. In particular, the Equality Act requires the school to develop a plan to show how it will develop services in the following three areas:

- To increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school's curriculum.
- To improve the physical environment of the school to ensure disabled students are able to take advantage of education and other benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.
- To improve the delivery of information to disabled students

This policy requires the school to demonstrate their principles and practices do not discriminate against people with a disability. All staff are expected to be aware of the values within this policy and to treat disabled people, whether pupils, staff or visitors, fairly and with respect.

Within this policy, the definition of a person with a disability is one who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The Accessibility Policy addresses provision for any person with permanent or temporary disability. Discrimination can take place in two ways:

- Treating a person “less favourably” than others for a reason relating directly to their disability.
- Failing to make a “reasonable adjustment” to ensure they are not placed at a “substantial disadvantage” for a reason relating to their disability.

2. Objectives of the Accessibility Plan

- To ensure all students are fully involved in school life and are making good progress no matter their disability.
- To identify barriers to participation, for all members of the school community and find practical solutions to overcome these.
- To work collaboratively with students and their parents/carers to create appropriate provision, including robust EHCPs.
- To increase the confidence, sensitivity and expertise of teachers and support staff when teaching or supporting students with a wide range of disabilities.
- To meet the requirements of the Equalities Act and the SEND Code of Practice in respect of students with disabilities.

3. Relationship to other policies

Relates to the Equality Policy, Health and Safety, SEN, curriculum, child protection, recruitment, selection and retention of staff, teaching and learning and pupil behaviour policy.

4: School Context

Middleton is a purpose built community school with 108 pupils currently on roll, all with an EHCP, from Reception to Year 6. The school serves the whole of East Herts and the Lea Valley. This includes rural areas as well as a number of small towns each of which has a range of socio-economic backgrounds including areas of poverty. In addition the school also has pupils on roll from out of County; for example Essex and Enfield. The majority of pupils are transported to and from school on local authority transport.

Pupils have a range of difficulties which may include Autism, ADHD, Downs / Williams Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, epilepsy and an increasing number with medical and physical needs. Pupils' language difficulties are a significant factor which affects their learning. There has also been an increase in the number of pupils with social and emotional difficulties. A growing number of children have a complex mixture of needs.

NB – A table of the school demographics / characteristics can be seen in the Equality Policy - paragraph 4.

5. Vision and Values of Middleton

Middleton School seeks to ensure all members of the School have equal access whatever their gender, colour, ethnicity, age, social background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances or sexual orientation.

6. Aims

The school will seek to:

- Fulfil its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and any related or subsequent legislation.
- Identify and remove any unjustified discrimination against people with a disability.
- Pursue a programme of development and improvement:
 - A. in facilities,
 - B. in procedures
 - C. in the skills, knowledge and understanding of staff to meet the needs of people with a disability.
- Ensure disabled staff, pupils and visitors have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of the school.
- Take into account the views of individual pupils or members of staff when their requirements are being assessed.
- Provide appropriate information and support to members of staff working with those who have disabilities, either as colleagues, pupils or parents.
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable staff and pupils who become disabled during their time at the school to continue on their chosen path.
- Accommodate disabled visitors, wherever reasonably possible, to enable them to participate in events held on school premises.
- Ensure that school premises are accessible and safe for disabled people, as far as this is reasonably practicable and within the constraints of existing buildings.

7. Inventory of the school's commitment to accessibility for pupils

<p>All pupils have a detailed individual EHCP which addresses social, emotional and academic issues. Transport is offered to children based on their individual needs. The statutory rules are under 8's more than 2 miles and over 8's who live more than 3 miles from the school.</p>		
<p>SLCN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makaton – all staff /pupils • Staff signing training - SALT team • Proloquo2go software • Speech / communication devices • SALT team based within school who work with designated pupils • Simplified use of language • Intervention groups • Use of colourful semantics • Use of symbols/ PECS • Use of Communication in print 	<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive approach to reading with a sequentially designed curriculum. • Wealth of pre-reading resources. • Communication in print • One to one reading • Clicker programmes • Differentiated whole school phonics sessions • Designated TA Support for reading • Spoken audio books • CPD for staff and parents 	<p>Autism / Sensory Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals including visual timetables • Ear defenders • Attention Autism • Courses for Parents • Staff training on use of language {SALT} • Curriculum which promotes 'change', flexibility and the need to take 'safe risks' • Use of Sensory Room /resources • Additional week at May half term to allow family holidays to be conducted when the environment is more favourable.
<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist classroom furniture • Specialist input for VI / HI • Annual training - epi-pen / buccal • Rigorous health care plans • Staff trained in tube feeding • Trips – risk assessed • Moving and handling training • Specialist changing area • Disabled toilet / shower • Buggies/ mobility support • Special diets • Assistance with eating • Minibus support with travel and limited mobility(+ disabled badge) • OT input 	<p>Academic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small classes • One to one when required • Differentiated lessons • Intervention groups eg Jigsaw – for children making limited progress • Ability groupings for teaching within key strands of the curriculum • Analysis of data - appropriate measures. • Readers / scribes / extra time in exams where appropriate • Staff training – appropriate learning styles • Strong home/ school relationships • Implementation of the M Team 	<p>Emotional and Behavioural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps Training for all staff • Therapeutic approach to behaviour management • Roots and fruits/ behaviour strategy documentation • Anxiety mapping • Staff - mental health courses • Well being lead teacher in post • Snack and chat/ Draw and talk • EP involvement • Blue room for 'time out' • Courses for parents • Pastoral Intervention groups • Specialist Involvement eg art therapist • Social services
<p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer recruitment training • Return to work programme • Sensitive placement and job roles for staff with disabilities • Disabled parking allocation • Amended job descriptions • Well being resources accessible. 	<p>Parents/ Governors/ Visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled parking allocation • Communication access through a variety of mediums • Use of interpreter where appropriate • Gates open during working hours • Site access protected by security system (including internal doors)- which is staffed during school hours • CPD available for both parents and Governors • Flexibility of access to meetings EG times/ venues/ virtual • Access to Family Liaison Officers 	

The school carries out an accessibility audit annually in advance of reviewing this policy. The last audit was undertaken by the Accessibility and Equality Governor in February 2024, with specific reference to effective differentiation and accessibility for all. In addition, staff undertook an audit of pupil accessibility and equality during the Autumn term 2023

8. Staff

Employment

The Disability Section of the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for the school, and therefore, any of its employees to discriminate in the field of employment, against a disabled person for a reason that relates to the persons disability, if that treatment cannot be justified. This applies not only to requirements, but to all areas of employment including the terms of employment, opportunities for promotion, transfer or training, dismissals or redundancies. Wherever practicable, the school will seek to:

- Employ disabled people in jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- Ensure that disabled employees are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- Ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged when the renewal of fixed term contracts is being considered.

Support in Employment

Some disabled people may require additional support when settling into their working environment. In particular, consideration will be given to any adaptation, for example, the provision of equipment or the modification of the working environment, which may be necessary to enable the individual to work on equal terms with non-disabled colleagues. The additional support required will initially be assessed by a member of the Medical and Accessibility Team and reviewed periodically by the team as a whole. Any necessary modifications should ideally be agreed and carried out before the individual commences work. Some of the adjustments may have implications for other staff and it is important that they are consulted about proposed changes. Consideration should also be given to parking facilities, toilet facilities and health and safety issues such as evacuation procedures.

Members of Staff who become disabled

Losing the services of a member of staff who becomes disabled can deprive the schools of a considerable asset in terms of the skills and experience of the individual as well as an investment in that individual's training and development. Where practicable the school will attempt to retain staff who become disabled and to ensure suitable employment for them. Senior members of staff should deal as sensitively as possible with these situations and seek help where required. Help should be sought when considering not only the possible effects of the disability but also other consequential disadvantages, such as loss of status, financial loss and reduced self-esteem. The school is required by law to make reasonable adjustments to enable the individual to continue in post. There are a number of possible options to consider:

- Continuing in the same post – Where the disability has occurred as the result of an accident, for example, the individual has been absent from work for some time, the school will be flexible and sensitive in assisting staff to return to work.
- In circumstances where it is envisaged that some difficulties may be encountered the school will consider a phased return to work or a permanent reduction in hours until confidence and ability are fully restored.
- Redeployment – Where it is not practicable for the individual to continue in their former post, the school will attempt to redeploy the individual into a suitable alternative post. The individual's qualifications and skills as well as their own preferences in terms of type of work should be taken into account when trying to identify a suitable vacancy.
- Premature retirement on grounds of incapacity – Where it has been decided that redeployment is impracticable, the member of staff may be considered for retirement on the grounds of medical incapacity under the normal terms of the appropriate procedure.
- Termination of employment - If all other options have been explored and found to be impracticable, dismissal on grounds of incapacity should be considered. If it proves to be necessary, termination will be in accordance with the

appropriate procedures, which include a right of appeal. In some cases, the disability will be a progressive condition, which will develop over time and a number of the options could therefore be appropriate at different stages.

9. Visitors and External Groups The school sometimes organises events that are attended by visitors to the school and it will ensure that all buildings used for such an event are appropriately accessible. Information for emergency and evacuation procedures will be provided. If the school enters into a contract for hire with an external person or group, it will aim to make all possible reasonable adjustments to enable accessibility. However it is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure that the part of the premises used meets the needs of their group.

10. Responsibility

. RESPONSIBILITIES

- All staff are responsible for identifying and removing barriers to learning for disabled pupils.
- All leaders are responsible for improving accessibility within their area of responsibility.
- The Governing Body is responsible for the approval of this plan, ensuring that no pupil, staff member or visitor is treated less favourably on account of any disability and that all reasonable adjustments are made and carry out routine inspections and maintain entrances.
- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the resourcing, implementation and updating of this plan. In addition the head teacher has a responsibility to provide an annual report to the Governors regarding implementation of the Accessibility Plan.