

Bellingham Middle School

Accessibility Plan 2021 - 2024

Date adopted: February 2021

Introduction:

The purpose of this plan is to show how Bellingham Middle School intends over time to increase the accessibility of our school for disabled pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors.

Legal Background

This Accessibility Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act.

According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if:

- (a) He or she has a physical or mental impairment, and
- (b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

You can read more about substantial and long term effects [here](#).

The Accessibility Plan is structured to complement and support the school's Equality Objectives, and these are also published on the school website.

Objectives

The Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:-

- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a physical disability and/or sensory impairments, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as any other pupils; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of their duties under the Equality Act 2010); this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe;

- Improve and maintain access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary – this covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe;
- Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

Contextual Information

The school building is very accessible, and has accessible facilities, including ramps, hoists, lifts and adaptations. The school is developing Additionally Resourced Provision, there is a sensory room and high levels of support for children with SEND.

The school supports children with a wide range of disabilities, which include: moderate and specific learning difficulties, communication difficulties, ASD/ADHD, behaviour, anxiety, attachment, emotional and social difficulties and children with physical disabilities.

Training

Appropriate training has been provided for staff and all First Aid certificates are kept up to date. The school has a current and compliant policy for managing medical conditions in school.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually. What follows is a table of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

The priorities for the Accessibility Plan for our school were identified by:

- ✎ Head Teacher
- ✎ SENDCo
- ✎ Schools' Equalities Coordinator from Northumberland County Council
- ✎ A group of pupils from each year group who shared their perceptions of accessibility.
- ✎ The governing body

We welcome and will consider any suggestions and practical improvements that are suggested to us by disabled service users and their families.

The action plans that follow show how the school will address the priorities identified and resource any changes that need to be implemented.

Increasing access to the curriculum for disabled pupils

Improving teaching and learning lies at the heart of the school's work. Through self-review and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), we aim to enhance staff knowledge, skills and understanding to promote excellent teaching and learning for all children.

Target	Strategy	Timescale and responsibility	Success criteria
Ensure that all staff are aware of the needs of individual children with SEN or disability when planning and delivering the curriculum. The SENDCo's implementation of the Graduated Approach ensures that cycles of support are being offered and providing the right support at the right time	Maintain Individual EHCPs and PEPs and share information with other agencies involved with the child. Ensure that assessment always outlines 'next learning steps'	Staff and SENDCo	Information sharing supports staff to create the best inclusive environment for every child with SEND. Parents understand the role they can play in supporting development. Impact on the number of behavioural incidents.
Ensure that all staff have access to and awareness of the range of services and cycles of specialist support available to support children and young people. This includes those connected with emotional health and wellbeing	Ensure that local directories, referral routes and providers are familiar to all staff. Develop a clear referral route for emotional wellbeing issues to guide prompt referrals to available interventions and support organisations	Head Teacher SENDCo PSHE Lead Throughout the 3 year cycle of the plan	Improved access to prompt, specialist cycles of support for children and their families. Barriers to emotional health and wellbeing can be identified and addressed.

Ensure that all children with medical conditions are well supported within school, so that they can access the curriculum.	Ensure that all staff and governors are familiar with and follow the school's current policy for managing medical conditions in school.	Head Teacher SENDCO All staff Ongoing	The principles of the guidance are evident in practice. Family-school contact ensures that school addresses medical needs. Staff training is updated as required.
Emotional health barriers are addressed by all staff to develop strategies to support emotional and social development.	Introduction of 20 minutes of 'wellbeing time' at the end of the school day will resume when school is open to all pupils again. Psychological wellbeing has been a strong focus in lockdown home-school contact	All staff implementing the approach in school	Children feel safe, secure and are able to access support to deal with emotional challenges that might be barriers to accessing the curriculum. Emotional wellbeing will remain a strong focus as the pandemic is controlled.
Additionally Resourced Provision on site	Pupils with disabilities have access to adapted learning spaces, assistive technology, a sensory diet. Inclusive practice is also available in every mainstream classroom in school, for example a quiet zone to move to and continue learning without distractions.	All staff	The curriculum becomes more accessible to all children because they are aware that they have choices and that all staff share the school's commitment to making reasonable adjustments that make the curriculum more accessible.

Improving access to the physical environment of the school

Our site is extensive but all on one level and very well adapted for people with physical and sensory disabilities. It remains a priority to continue to improve the physical environment of the school to increase the opportunities disabled users and visitors may take advantage of the facilities we have, both indoors and outdoors. We have a wide range of equipment and resources available for day to day use. We work closely with parents to make the necessary adaptations for any children with disabilities who attend school. We keep resource provision under constant review. The school's improvement planning process is the vehicle for considering such needs on an annual basis. The Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) is our main ongoing project in this area.

Target	Strategy	Timescale and responsibility	Success criteria
To meet the physical, sensory, behavioural and emotional needs of each individual child with a disability or medical need and optimise the learning environment for every child.	Continue to develop the ARP and focus on resourcing this with specialist equipment and technology. Areas of focus include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sensory diet• Sensory room• Traverse climbing wall• Quiet spaces in classrooms• Specialist feeding resources• Equipment to support writing at length• Facilities to take a nap during the school day	Whole school ongoing	Adaptations are in place in anticipation of a child's arrival in school (if we are aware of a disability.) Every pupil makes the best progress possible in an environment adapted to their needs Regular consultation with pupils to ensure that their experience of the environment matches our ambition for it to be accessible. (Appendix 2)

Developing the school environment to have fewer sensory distractions and to be an environment where ASD or neuro divergent children feel well supported	Visual timetables displayed in every classroom, 'stripped back' displays in school, quiet areas in every classroom, looking for solutions to the loud bells that punctuate lesson times.	All staff	Staff and pupils are better attuned to behavioural triggers and all learners have what they need to be able to thrive in the purposeful school environment.
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Improving the delivery of written information to disabled pupils

This will include planning to make written information that is normally provided by the school to its pupils available to disabled pupils. Examples might include textbooks and information about school events. The information should take account of pupils' disabilities and pupils' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable timeframe. The school is continuously developing awareness of agencies and sources of materials to be able to make information more accessible as required.

Target	Strategy	Timescale and responsibility	Success criteria
Improve the availability of written material in alternative formats when specifically requested or when likely to make the curriculum more accessible to a child with a learning or physical disability.	The school will continuously develop understanding and awareness of the standards and services which can be used. (For example, sharing audio files, using pictograms and graphics to aid understanding) Use of coloured overlays	SENDCo/All staff As required	Staff will be aware of web based and physical resources and organisations that can provide guidance about information in different languages and formats
Use best practice and guidance in making printed documentation accessible to children (see	Reasonable adjustments to texts are made as appropriate	All staff Ongoing.	The accessibility best practice guidance and strategies we have been trained to use are in use.

Appendix 1)			
Ensuring that the language used in school is the most respectful and accurate when we describe conditions, identity or disability	Planning ahead and ensuring that partners such as supply staff or visitors to school are well informed in advance	All staff/ongoing	A respectful school environment where all children feel safe and supported. Modelling best inclusive practice to our children and young people
Use the Guide Dogs Custom Eyes Service to source appropriate large print tailor made reading books.	Give all pupils equal access to high quality reading materials	As needs are identified SENDCo	Enhancement of the school's focus on making reading accessible and enjoyable for all pupils

Appendix 1:

Making printed information accessible.

Resources and guidance:

[Accessible Communication Formats](#) (Government guidance)

[Creating accessible documents factsheet](#) (Abilitynet)

[Abilities and assistive technology](#) (UK Association for Accessible Formats)

[The Sensory Trust information sheet on clear and large print](#)

[Am I making myself clear?](#) (Mencap's guidelines for accessible writing)

[Dyslexia Style Guide](#) (British Dyslexia Association)

[Communication friendly environments](#) (from the Communication Trust)

[Custom eyes](#) Schools and individuals can join the scheme which can make (at RRP) large print tailor made books which include:

- picture books
- fiction
- non-fiction
- Oxford Reading Tree
- GCSE and A Level English texts and textbooks
- revision guides for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4

Appendix 2

Consultation with pupils about accessibility in school.

What helps us to learn and be happy in school? (date completed)

What is the perfect start to a day if we want you to feel good about learning?

Think about days you feel you learn best, what are they like?

Are there things that school has or does that help you to learn better?

What is not so helpful in the classroom and what makes things difficult?

What could make things easier?

Are there any times of the day, or things that happen in school that worry you?