SOUTHERN EDUCATION TRUST

Ferndown First School

POLICY:

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN

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Review Date:	**June 2028**
Review Frequency:	**3-Yearly**

Ferndown First School
Accessibility Policy and Plan

Introduction

It is our intention to remove, as far as we can, those barriers which make it hard for children and adults with a disability to take part in the day-to-day life of our school and benefit from the educational experiences and services we provide.

We aim to ensure that our school is a welcoming place that understands and responds effectively to children and adults with disabilities and we recognise the importance of a review and planning procedure associated with continuous development and improvement.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a *'physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*

This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEND, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEND.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- They must not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person's disability
- They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
- This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.
- Schools are allowed to treat disabled children / young people more favourably than non-disabled children / young people, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments and making changes to practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what the school's offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can i.e. to put them on a more level footing with children / young people without disabilities
- Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and

young people. Public bodies also have specific duties under the public sector equality duty and must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and must prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty. Objectives must be specific and measurable.

The duties cover discrimination in the provision of services and the provision of education, including admissions and exclusions. All providers must make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices and by the provision of auxiliary aids and services.

School governing bodies and proprietors must also publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and their accessibility plans.

The Responsible Body

The responsible body (in maintained schools this is the governing body) must prepare:

- an accessibility plan;
- further such plans at such times as may be prescribed.

- An accessibility plan is a plan for, over a prescribed period
    - increasing the extent to which disabled children / young people can participate in the school's curriculum;
    - improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled children / young people are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and
    - improving the delivery to disabled children / young people
        (i) within a reasonable time, and
        (ii) in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents, of information which is provided in writing for children / young people who are not disabled.
- An accessibility plan must be in writing.
- During the period to which the plan relates, the responsible body must keep
    - its accessibility plan under review and, if necessary, revise it.
- It is the duty of the responsible body to implement its accessibility plan.

The Statutory Policies for Schools (updated Sept 2022) states that it is a requirement that maintained schools, academies, free schools, independent schools, sixth-form colleges, further education colleges and Pupil Referral Units must review their accessibility plan

every three years. It also states that approval should be by the governing body however, they are free to delegate the approval right to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the head teacher.

The School's Context

We are an Academy school for children age from 4 years to 9 years. The school comprises of one building covering a large site, of one storey construction.

We support children and families with a range of disabilities as defined by The Equality Act 2010. These include, but are not limited to, hearing and vision impairments; physical disabilities including wheelchair users; long term health conditions such as asthma, epilepsy, cancer and severe allergies; and social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The School's Aims

SDP Aims

- ✓ *Ensure all children have a positive school experience.*
- ✓ *Improve attendance for children with SEND and those in receipt of Free School meals.*
- ✓ *Further develop support for our small group of children struggling to regulate emotions and behaviour.*
- ✓ *Develop curriculum provision for children who have been agreed suitable for a specialist setting but remain in a mainstream school.*
- ✓ *Develop an oracy curriculum.*

Formulating our Accessibility Plan

The priorities for the Accessibility Plan for our school were identified through consultation with:

- **Headteacher**
- **SENCO / Inclusion Manager**
- **Governors**
- **Staff**

Process

Our accessibility plan has been developed as follows:

1) Access audit and review of current activities completed.
2) Actions to eliminate barriers identified (with short-term, medium-term and long-term targets).
3) Goals and targets set which can be measured & include time frames.
4) The Plan's contents checked.
5) Publication of the plan (and included it in the governors' report to parents).
6) Implemented the plan and allocated adequate resources.
7) Evaluated the plan every 3 years (with the Accessibility Plan under on-going review and revision as necessary).

In addition to this we will:

- continually review the environment of the school, the way we plan, prepare and deliver curriculum and the information we provide for children / young people so that we can improve the access for both individuals and groups;
- work to provide an atmosphere where all children / young people feel safe and valued;
- promote understanding of disability and work to show positive models of people with a disability. We will avoid stereotypes and use language which emphasises the person rather than the disability.
- examine those parts of our active and extra-curricular activities which may have limited access for children / young people with a disability and see if it is possible to provide learning experiences which promote similar development of knowledge and understanding.

Accessing the School's Accessibility Plan

Our Accessibility Plan will be made available via the following:

- School website
- Printed copies which are available from the school office on request

Other School Policies & Documentation

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity

- Health & Safety (including off-site safety)
- SEND Policy and the school's SEND Information Report.
- Relational Policy
- School Development Plan

The School's Complaints Procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

AUDITS & ACTION PLANS

Access Audit

Date: June 2025

Lead member of staff: Sean Watts, Caroline Cload

Section 1 The school can deliver the curriculum to all children / young people. Give details of items developed, current practise and things to be developed.

Statement	Fully	Partly	Not	Plan Prompt
Teachers and assistants have trained to teach and support disabled children / young people. Staff are confident about meeting the needs of children / young people with a disability.		✓		• Wide range of needs with more specialist-agreed children recently. • Proactive. • Identify CPD needs for staff taking into account children's needs. • Seek external professional advice and training for specific children.
All school staff and the governors have had access to training on disability equality and inclusion.		✓		• INSET session on an overview of disability, equality and inclusion rather than on a specific type of need. • SSB would benefit from refresher training.
We take advice to ensure our classrooms are optimally organised and resourced for disabled children / young people.	✓			

Positive images of people with different abilities are apparent in the classrooms and the school generally.		✓		• Positive photos are needed – create a diversity and inclusion wall in the school.
Staff plan alternative ways of providing experience and understanding of parts of the curriculum. i.e. All children / young people are encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities. Alternative forms of exercise are given in PE and games for disabled children / young people.	✓			
Lessons are responsive to diversity. Lessons allow children / young people to work individually, with a partner, in groups and whole class. There is extensive peer support and collaborative learning in support of those with a learning disability.	✓			
When planning the deployment of additional adults, there is a consideration of pupils with disabilities so that if needed, they benefit from high staffing ratios and smaller group activities in order to ensure their inclusion and raise attainment.	✓			
Staff recognise and allow for the mental effort/additional time required by some disabled children / young people, e.g. using lip reading, processing time for children / young people with Social Communication Difficulties.	✓			
When renewing computer hardware and software, machines and materials are chosen to support children / young people with a disability, e.g. vocalising brailling, touch screen, assistive technology.	✓			• We have a whole school Clicker8 license. • Reader pens have been purchased for KS2 children. • Some laptops have touchscreen function. • Talking strip purchased for EYFS.
Provision of laptops or e-devices are considered to aid recording and / or communication.	✓			• Specialist teacher advice used to determine children who benefit from assistive technology.

School visits are subject to a regular review to ensure increased levels of access or alternative experience.	✓			• Adaptions and adjustments are made • Children are included in visits, including boat travel and forest school activities. • Reasonable adjustments are made and parent support is requested where necessary.
The school links with other schools to share good practice.	✓			• Network of support with SENCOs through trust. • Links are made with local pre-schools. • We work with local specialist settings e.g. TADSS, Victoria School. • New merger with Delta Trust will support sharing of good practice.
Staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation. When curriculum units are developed the originators always ask if there could be a disability dimension.	✓			• Routes into curriculum have been considered with an SEN dimension.
Access Arrangements are used when appropriate to support children / young people with accessing assessments.	✓			• Quieter environment provided for assessments. • Small groups/chunks of time with movement breaks. • Enlarged print where necessary.
The school signposts children, young people and families to further support SENDIASS, Early Help, etc.	✓			• Information on local disability charities and services are posted in the school newsletter when appropriate.
A governor takes particular interest in, and responsibility for promoting disability awareness and inclusion.	✓			

Section 2: The school is designed to meet the needs of all children / young people.

Statement	Fully	Partly	Not	Plan Prompt
The size and layout of areas allow access for all children / young people, including wheelchair users.	✓			• Exit arrangements. • Slope. • Fire exits.
In considering the school budget there is a clear plan to improve access and resources for those with a disability.	✓			• TAs. • Resources. • Building repair and maintenance. • Maglocks ensure a safe environment for children with particular needs.
There is a plan which shows priorities for major and minor works, costed and included in the School Improvement Plan.	✓			• Plan for building works to create four separate SEN spaces: SEMH room, Communication and Interaction room, Y2 sensory break out space, developing sensory shed.
The school has procedures to ensure the rigorous maintenance of specialist equipment and facilities.	✓			• PE. • Checks and risk assessment on sensory and physical equipment. • Removal of unsafe equipment e.g. ropes.
Emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform all pupils including children / young people with SEND, including alarms with both visual and auditory components.	✓			• PEEPS • Take advice from local specialist settings re evacuation procedures for children with ASD/SEMH needs.
Personal Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in place to provide people with any form of disability, who cannot be adequately protected by the standard fire safety provisions within a premises, with a similar level of safety from the effects of fire as all other occupants.	✓			• Hearing – radio aids. • PEEPS.
With regards to *'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014)',* there a policy in place for the effective and safe administration of medication.	✓			• Medical Tracker has been rolled out to track, monitor and ensure safety for those with medical conditions.

Personal hygiene and medical issues are dealt with, with full attention to the safety and dignity of all concerned i.e. children / young people taking medication, those with limited toileting training.	✓			• Intimate care plans and recording on medical tracker. • Advice and funding from Dorset physical and medical needs team for specific children.
Pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements are safe. Disabled parking spots are available.	✓			
There is a positive attitude to the recruitment and employment of staff with a disability and a good knowledge about the levels of support they are entitled to.	✓			• Staff are supported with appropriate furniture if needed eg special chairs. • SAS for wellbeing and medical/physical support for staff. • Staff with medical needs and healthcare plans are considered and recorded confidentially on Medical Tracker.
Furniture and equipment are selected, adjusted and located appropriately. Steps are taken to reduce the background noise for HI children / young people and advice sought from other agencies to take appropriate measures in the classroom.	✓			• Hearing Support Service assess the school environment, and we take appropriate steps to comply with recommendations.
The décor and / or signage is not confusing or disorientating for children / young people with a visual impairment, Social Communication Difficulties or epilepsy. Colour schemes provide colour & tonal contrast for VI children / young people. Labels and signs are presented pictorially and in written word if needed for people with a disability.		✓		• Environment has been adapted to make it less visually overwhelming. Neutral colours and simpler classroom displays have been implemented across the school. • Visual clutter has been moved away from teaching spaces. **Action:** Office to re-print tray label and school signage with images from widget.

Section 3: The school delivers materials in other formats**.**

Statement	Fully	Partly	Not	Plan Prompt
Information is provided in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in braille for children / young people and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with forms of printed information.	✓ Where requested			• Some parents have literacy difficulties and when we know or suspect this, we support them, reading literature, explaining newsletters. • Interpreters are used, including sign language interpreters.
Information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly or people with disabilities e.g. reading aloud, overhead projections and describing diagrams.	✓			• Summaries of meetings provided in bullet point format to parents who inform us they have ADHD or other needs.
ICT facilities are used to produce written information in different formats as appropriate.	✓			
Staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities. External agencies have raised staff awareness i.e. VI, HI, occupational / physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, school nurses, Health visitors…	✓			• Radio Aid. • Diabetes monitor. • OT /Physio. • Community nurse training for children with specific medical needs • Oncology nurses have supported us to understand one child's medical needs.
There is an effective process to deal with both complaints and positive suggestions from the parents of children / young people with a disability.	✓			• Complaints policy. • Complaints training.

Access Planning Template for Period 2025-2028

Lead member of staff: Sean Watts/Caroline Cload **Date: June 2025**

The main priorities in our access plan focus on:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled children / young people can participate in the school curriculum.
- Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled children / young people can take advantage of education and associated services.
- Improving the delivery to disabled children / young people of information that is provided in writing for children / young people who are not disabled.

Ferndown First School will monitor the implementation of the plan and keep under review the access needs of the school.

	Focus/Objective	**Action**	**People Involved**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Short Term	Improve accessibility of written information around the school building.	Improve school signs and labels within classrooms and wider school area with visual support, e.g. from Widget.	*SENCO/ office/ teaching staff*	*Summer 2025*	*£300 per year*
	Positive images of people with different abilities to be apparent in the classrooms and the school generally.	Create a 'Diversity Wall' with images of people with a range of disabilities and special educational needs.	*SENCO/ Headteacher*	*Summer 2026*	*£300*
	All school staff and the governors to have access to training on disability equality and inclusion.	Updated training for all staff SSB on protected characteristics, disabilities, equality and inclusion.	*SENCO/ Headteacher*	*Autumn 2025*	-------
Medium Term	Improve staff knowledge and expertise to support children with a range of complex needs, reflecting the changes to our school cohort.	• Ongoing support from specialist teachers in the areas of SEMH and Communication and Interaction. • Outreach and Inreach support from Beaucroft school. • Enhanced transition planning for new EYFS children with higher needs.	SENCO/ EYFS Lead	Summer 2026	TBC

		• Use of the VSEND tool to support setting readiness.			
	Improve access to the curriculum by embedding assistive technology within classroom practice.	• Refresh staff knowledge and confidence using Clicker8. • Audit the hardware available to teachers for children to access Clicker8 and other assistive technologies. • Consider investment in further reader pens for KS2 children with dyslexia.	SENCO/ Teaching Staff	Summer 2026	TBC
	Improve accessibility of trips, visits and school events for children with disabilities.	• Consider alternative arrangements for whole school events such as sports day, school productions and church visits. • Consider further reasonable adjustments to support all children to access school trips. • Continue the offer of after-school clubs with a focus on supporting children with disabilities and SEN to attend.	SENCO/ SMT	Summer 2026	TBC
Long Term	Create separate purpose-built or adapted spaces around the school to cater for specific cohorts of need.	• Space for children with SEMH needs with access from the school hall. • Space for children with communication and interaction needs with access to a refurbished, secure internal courtyard. • Breakout space in the Y2 shared area to support small group teaching and sensory regulation. • Separate, quiet entrance to the school for children who find the start to the day challenging. • Create a calm down safe area for children h oar dysregulated. • Team Teach training level 2 for SLT.	SENCO/ SMT	Summer 2026	£25,000 (TBC)

Additional Views from Consultation

Parent Views

Parents were consulted via the newsletter on two separate occasions but did not provide any views towards the development of the plan.

Children's Views

In June 2025, our School Council representatives spoke to all classes to ask them the question 'How does Ferndown First school help children with disabilities?'

Children's responses included – we have disabled toilets, ramped areas, buddies, own tables available, sitting near the teacher if required, ear defenders, teachers using children's radio aids.

Other ideas for future improvement were

Checking the School's Access Plan

When a new Access Plan is formulated (every 3 years), the following check will be completed prior to publication.

Lead member of staff: _____ Governors _____ Date: _____

Period of Plan being checked; _____

1. Does the plan cover:	**Yes/No**	**Comments**
Access to the Curriculum?		
Access to the Physical Environment?		
Auxiliary aids and services?		
Teaching and learning practices?		
Staff training?		
Culture and ethos?		
Provision of written information?		
2. Are there targets that are:		
Short term?		
Medium term?		
Long term?		
3. Are there clear strategies to ensure targets fulfilled?		
4. Are there clear outcomes linked to the targets?		
5. Is there a realistic time frame?		
6. Are there indications as the resourcing of the plan?		

Recommendations

Insert any recommendations made as a result of the checking exercise.

Appendix 1: Review of Ferndown First School Accessibility Plan 2022 - 2025

	TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME
Short Term	Improve accessibility of written information around the school building.	• Improve school signs and labels within classrooms and wider school area with visual support, e.g. from Widget.	• Labels for all classrooms were made consistent and centrally printed, creating a calmer and less cluttered visual environment around the school. However, widget symbols now need to be put onto all classroom labels to improve access and independence.
	Positive images of people with different abilities to be apparent in the classrooms and the school generally.	• Include images of people with different disabilities, specifically those which represent children within our school community.	• Positive images of people with specific disabilities, particularly those with clefts, have been used in classrooms and in teaching materials in response to a particular child's needs. • Staff have been reminded and encouraged to use diverse images in their teaching materials and PowerPoints to support disability, diversity and inclusion. • A more prominent, central school diversity display needs to be created next.
	All school staff and the governors to have access to training on disability equality and inclusion.	• Staff meeting to ensure teachers and school support staff are informed about disabilities, equality and inclusion. • Updated training for SSB on disabilities, equality and inclusion.	• Teachers and TAs have attended training over the last three years on understanding and supporting a wide range of disabilities and special educational needs. Specific staff have been given access to enhanced training and meetings with external professionals related to the needs of specific children they are working with. • Staff have all been trained on protected characteristics through safeguarding training. • Now a general refresher of disability, equality and inclusion is due for all staff and SSB. To be scheduled on an INSET.
Medium Term	Staff are confident about meeting the needs of children / young people with a disability.	• Identify CPD needs for staff linked to the needs of the children they are working with. • Staff to have a good general awareness of a range of disabilities.	• Staff across the school have had access to training, reports, advice and meetings with specialist teachers and external professionals both within and outside the trust on an ongoing basis, as needed.

	TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME
		• Seek support from the local authority SEND team, specialist teachers and links within the CAT for high-quality CPD.	
	Improve access to the curriculum by embedding assistive technology within classroom practice.	• Clicker8 site wide license to be embedded with further training and refreshers on an ongoing basis for staff. • Induction support for new staff to use Clicker8 as they join. • Investigate additional assistive technologies that can improve access to the curriculum and enhance independence.	• Clicker8 has been used well in KS2 and all staff received training on how to use this. A refresher would be helpful to remind and support staff on using it across the school. • Two reader pens were purchased for use in Year 4 to improve independence and access to learning. These were very successful for the children who used them.
Long Term	Create a multi-purpose building which can facilitate an accessible learning environment and sensory regulation area for children with special educational needs and disabilities.	• Investigate planning and logistics involved in building a new structure within the school grounds. • Take specialist teacher advice on how to equip the space to best support disabled children. • Build and furnish the structure to enable its use.	• Summer house was purchased for the EYFS/Y1 courtyard. PINS were asked to support us to turn this into a sensory shed. In it's first year this space became needed for one particular child and therefore couldn't be turned into the sensory space it was intended for, but it can be from the 2025-6 academic year. • Building plans are in place to create new spaces for disability and SEND in four locations around the school, plus plans for a separate sensory-friendly entrance to school for children who need a softer start to the day.