



## **Accessibility Policy and Plan**

This policy is reviewed bi-annually

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## **Introduction**

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the School Committee has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

1. not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
2. to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
3. to plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Proprietor/School Committee 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.

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

### **Stowmarket High School Context**

Stowmarket High School is a mixed comprehensive school with 905 on roll pupils. The school comprises of two buildings covering a large site, of two or three storey construction. It is the vision of the school to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treated with respect. Pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity. They should develop values which prepare them for and help them to develop an appreciation of life in modern Britain. The school aims to reduce and remove barriers to learning in every area of the life of the school and is committed to delivering equal opportunities, and best provision for all pupils.

Definition of Disability: "A person suffers a disability 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 carry out normal day-to-day activities." Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties.

## **The School's Aims**

- embraces a partnership between the school and home
- every individual has a right to be part of a community where each member is valued and respected for their own worth irrespective of race, colour, creed or ability
- children will be helped to appreciate that they are members of the wider community in its richness and diversity
- curriculum provides a setting in which all children have an equal opportunity to grow in understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.

**The Stowmarket High School Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:**

- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Emergency Plan
- Equality Policy
- Health & Safety Policy (Trust policy)
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

## **Curriculum**

The reasonable adjustments needed for each pupil are assessed at transition, on admission and through data analysis, Annual Review of pupils with statement or EHCP and via an Individual Risk Assessment Plan.

Stowmarket High School recognises that key elements in a successful planned and accessible approach are likely to be:

- a focus on medium term planning, at the level of schemes of work;
- a focus on differentiation and accessibility of lessons;
- a clear assessment of the data of the full range of pupils;
- high expectations;
- appropriate deployment of learning support;
- appropriate pupil grouping and use of peer support.

As such, Stowmarket High School reviews the use of SENCo time, Learning Support resources, the training needs of subject staff, deployment of Learning Support Assistants and Interns, how schemes of work, including assemblies and the tutor programme, develop awareness of disability through the curriculum and access to specialist support, on a regular basis.

Disabled pupils need access to the full curriculum of lessons taught in the school, but also to activities of the school day and beyond the school day, for example:

- recreation;
- movement around the school;
- special events: sports days, visits by speakers etc.;
- extra-curricular activities: breakfast clubs, after-school clubs;
- school trips require an assessment of pupil needs and accessible transport is available from Suffolk CC.

Stowmarket High School is committed to ensuring that this takes place and reviews outcomes for disabled pupils, including:

- a detailed analysis of outcome data: learning progress checks and end of Key Stage outcomes;
- merit achievements on Go4Schools
- achievements in extra-curricular activities

## **Physical Environment**

The physical environment of the school has a differential impact on access for different groups of disabled pupils. Different aspects of the physical environment need to be considered in relation to different groups of pupils.

The SENCO undertakes an assessment of accessibility needs based on Year 6 statement information – around May/June in year prior to pupil joining the school.

Stowmarket High School complies with DDA access requirements:

- First and second floor areas are accessible by lift
- Disabled toilets are provided in the main teaching block
- A fully equipped changing and toilet facility enables personal care for wheelchair users
- Key members of staff are trained in restraint techniques and this is refreshed annually
- Accessibility of extra-curricular provisions e.g., the LRC is located near the disabled lift.

All site accessibility work will be assessed annually on the basis of need of intake and progression by pupils through the school.

Aspects of school environment to be considered against accessibility criteria when renovation work is undertaken, to include:

- improvements to lighting, signage, the acoustic environment, floor coverings;
- improvements to toilets, washing and changing facilities;
- changes to the layout of the playground and other common areas;
- the provision of ramps and lifts and improvements to doorways;
- the provision of particular furniture and equipment to improve access.

## **Delivery of Information**

Information for disabled pupils provided in writing for pupils and parents who are not disabled might include:

- handouts, timetables, worksheets, notices, information about school events, letters home, Parent mail

Improving the delivery of information might include making information available:

- in large print, in simplified language, electronically, using a symbol system or pictorial system on different coloured paper.

Identifying the appropriate format must take account of:

- pupils' impairments: access to information may be improved for particular groups of pupils by particular approaches, for example: pupils with learning difficulties may be able to access information more easily where it is provided in simplified language; pupils with language and communication difficulties may be able to access information more easily where it is provided in picture/symbol systems;
- preferences expressed by pupils or their parents.

## **Key action points**

- To continue to review the accessibility of the school site for visually impaired pupils
- To continue to review the accessibility of the school site for hearing impaired pupils
- Continue to develop training for Learning Support Assistants and teachers in specific learning difficulties e.g. autism, ADHD and visual impairment
- Continue to adapt the curriculum to enhance the inclusive ethos.
- A report will be made to the School Committee annually.

We are working within a national framework for educational inclusion provided by:

- Inclusive School (DfES 0774/2001)
- SEN & Disability Act 2001
- The SEN Code of Practice 2014
- The Disability Discrimination Act (amended for school 2001)
- Code of Practice for Schools (Disability Rights Commission)

## Access Audit

Access Report Ref.	Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost
1.	Stairs – the stairs within the building should have the first and last steps clearly marked. This is a standard policy in most schools as it acts as a warning. Both tread and rise should be marked with a contrasting colour. Those with depth perception issues could find it difficult to discern steps/drops or undulations.	Mark first and last stair in each staircase clearly with a contrasting colour.		
2.	The open nature of the 2nd and 3rd floors with clear glass making the lower floors clearly visible could cause some discomfort to some people. Having a line along the edge under the glass panel may make it more acceptable and comfortable for those with conditions such as vertigo or a fear of heights.	Mark the edge of the balcony on the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor clearly with a contrasting colour.		
3.	Signage within the 'yellow' area of the school is hard to read at a glance and may be difficult for those with visual impairment to read and understand due to lack of contrast between white text and yellow background.	Replace 'white on yellow' signs with 'black on yellow' signage to make reading this easier for visually impaired students and visitors.		

