



# NORTHFIELD SCHOOL & SPORTS COLLEGE

## ACCESSIBILITY POLICY & PLAN 2014-2017

Version:	4.0
Issue Date:	November 2016
Governing Body Approval - Date:	November 2016
Policy Review Date:	November 2017

## 1. Introduction

Improving access to education and educational achievement for students with special educational needs and disabilities is essential to ensure:

- Equality of opportunity
- Full participation in society
- Access to employment opportunities
- Inclusion within mainstream education.

In this context Northfield School operates within the following legislative framework:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and 2005
- The SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 2015

The Governing Body has three key duties towards disabled students:

1. Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school's curriculum.
2. Improving the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
3. Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

The delivery must be:

- Within a reasonable time
- In ways which are determined after taking account of the student's disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

## 2. Definition of Disability

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, an individual is deemed to have a disability if they have: *'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*.

Where

*'substantial' is more than minor or trivial - eg it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed and 'long-term' means 12 months or more - e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection'*

It should be noted that this definition is not just regarding physical difficulties but also covers a wide range of impairments, including sensory difficulties, learning difficulties and any impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness. In addition hidden impairments such as Dyslexia, Speech and Language Impairments, Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are also included as are HIV, Multiple Sclerosis and some forms of Cancer.

An impairment does not of itself mean that a student is disabled but rather it is the effect on the student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities of one or more of the following areas that has to be considered.

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- perception of risk of physical danger

A student's ability to memorise, concentrate, learn, speak and move are skills central to their education. Hence, any impairment that has a long-term and substantial effect on a student's ability to do these things may also amount to a disability.

For the purposes of the definition, all treatments, except the use of spectacles, are also ignored. The effect of the impairment on the person has to be considered, as it would be without any medication or other treatment. So a young person whose epilepsy is well controlled by drugs has to be considered as he/she would be if they were not having any treatment.

### **3. The Purpose and Direction of the School's Plan: Vision and Values**

Northfield School works in partnership with students and their parents/carers, teachers and the local authority to ensure that all young people in our school can receive a world class education within a system which values the diversity of all learners. The school has referred to SBC's Accessibility Strategy 2015-2017 (October 2015 <http://www.stockton.gov.uk/localoffer> ) when reviewing this policy.

The Governing Body will continue to ensure that educational provision within the school can respond flexibly to individual needs and that wherever possible students receive an education which properly meets their educational, social and emotional needs.

Northfield School's plan will:

- fulfil its statutory obligations under the legislation as indicated above
- allow anyone to visit the school and to apply to become a part of our community
- focus on removing any obvious barriers in every area of school life
- develop the school's commitment to equal opportunities
- actively raise awareness of accessibility issues at the school
- develop a sense of ownership of the plan and remind all staff of their responsibilities
- enable the school to be seen to be responding to individual needs
- set a clear direction for progress
- provide a framework for evaluation

### **4. Access to the curriculum**

Accessibility of the curriculum covers not only teaching and learning, but also the wider curriculum of the school, such as school trips and visits, after school activities and extended school activities.

One of the key issues in ensuring accessibility to the curriculum is that all lessons and activities should be planned to enable the effective inclusion of all learners with diverse needs. The primary responsibility for ensuring equality of access lies with the school.

Northfield School and Sports College ensures that all students receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum and are provided opportunities to extend their experiences and understanding in a range of contexts.

Except in exceptional circumstances, students with disabilities receive the full National Curriculum, and the formal process of disapplication is avoided.

Support for school leaders and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), in relation to policies, strategies and systems, is available from local authority staff, through regular SENCO Briefings, a support group for new SENCOs, SENCO drop ins and through training sessions and specific advice given to Early Years settings and schools.

Advice and support in relation to individual students is available from a range of LA teams and health staff.

In line with the Teachers' Standards (September 2012), and a quality first teaching approach, the Education Improvement Service supports the school to:

- adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students
- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable students to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit students' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support students' education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them

The school will:

- plan for and teach students with learning needs through a range of proven interventions
- use a range of inclusive teaching strategies
- provide a range of catch up programmes and support
- provide literacy and mathematics interventions to suit individual need
- ensure the effective supported transition of vulnerable children and young people
- evaluate the outcomes of its current additional provision and the value for money it provides
- make informed decisions about how best to target available funding in the future
- recognise and unlock the potential of students and develop a strong culture for success
- enhance the life chances of the most vulnerable children
- provide effective professional development for staff and governors
- keep parents and carers informed in line with school policies and the requirements of the 0-25 Code of Practice
- use interpreters or alternative forms of communication where necessary

## **6. Access to the Environment**

The school is aware that reasonable adjustments may be needed to classrooms or settings to create safe spaces, calming areas and workstations for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

(ASD) or Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties and to provide auxiliary aids for disabled students subject to the Reasonable Adjustment duty.

Support services from the Local Authority health and education teams advise about adaptations to the inside and outside environment for individuals to help include students with sensory integration needs.

This includes advice and guidance relating to:

- issues of physical space and how to reduce distractions
- opportunities to present information visually
- providing organisational strategies to complete activities
- having visual structure to help with organisation, increase clarity and provide instruction

## **7. Improvements to the physical environment**

Extensive improvements to the physical environment of the school have increased access for students across the full spectrum of disabilities, but in particular in relation to those with physical needs. The principal means by which this has been achieved has been through the DfES Schools Access Initiative (SAI) programme funding and building improvements carried out through the Local Authority Capital Budget. Adaptation work and special equipment has also been procured from SAI funds relevant to other forms of disability.

The school has a duty to take reasonable steps to tackle physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people and each year therefore the school identifies its priorities to enable funding to be sought via the Local Authority. To enable it to carry out this task the school has:

- Carried out an audit of buildings to identify where problems are
- An SEN register detailing the specific needs of students in Northfield School and Sports College
- A coherent and comprehensive approach to identifying the priorities for action and investment into the future.

To enable the school to make appropriate bids and to ensure access to the funding, the school will ensure that the Local Authority, (Stockton on Tees Borough Council), is aware of the school's priorities.

Based on its Asset Management planning to 2016, the school has completed the following large scale improvements

- All of the school's main entrances and access to playgrounds are accessible to wheelchair users.
- All of the school's main teaching blocks have an accessible toilet.
- Specially designed and equipped toilet/washroom has been installed for use by students with severe disabilities.
- New buildings and extensions have incorporated access for all people with disabilities as part of the design and build process, as required by building regulations for educational establishments.

- A lift has been installed to give access to second and third floors in the main school and sportsdrome building.
- All signs within the main teaching areas incorporate Braille.

For future planning, the school will plan that:

- All new or remodelled buildings for SEN accommodation include withdrawal spaces, work stations or alternative classroom layouts, internal and /or external time out spaces, including all necessary detailed design features.
- Building improvements to help individual students will be progressed where appropriate and where this is an efficient use of resources; minor adaptations to existing classrooms or buildings will be undertaken if it will provide for the needs of an individual student and where there is clearly an efficient use of resources.
- Reasonable adjustments are made, including the requirement to provide auxiliary aids for disabled students subject to the reasonable adjustment duty. These adjustments will take aspects of health and safety into account where relevant and appropriate.
- Minor building works or developments to improve accessibility, identified by the school, or through their accessibility strategy, will be included in the school development plan.
- Training is made available to Governors and school staff as necessary to raise awareness of school responsibilities to SEN and the Equality Act and how these may be met and opportunities to improve.
- Accessibility issues will continue to feature in Inclusion and SENCO briefings co-ordinated by the school, providing an opportunity to share good practice and resolve barriers to accessibility
- It maintains up-to-date information about the number of students with disabilities in the school, or anticipated in the future
- It considers how to improve accessibility through reorganising or rearranging aspects of the school environment without physical adaptation or building works.
- Its accessibility strategy is dovetailed with the overall Local Authority strategy for the planning of school places.

## **8. Social, Emotional and Mental Health**

Students may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other students may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

The school has clear processes to support students including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other students. The Department for Education publishes guidance on managing students' mental health and behaviour difficulties in schools.

The Local Authority supports the school by:

- Providing relevant and appropriate advice, training and development
- Liaising with health providers including CAMHS to support meeting the needs of students
- Commissioning additionally resourced provision and special educational provision to meet the needs of students with this area of SEN.

## **9. Admissions**

The oversubscription criterion for community and controlled schools in Stockton-on-Tees gives first priority to children in local authority care and second priority to those with complex needs who have been discussed at the High Needs Panel and who have been identified as needing a 'named' primary or secondary mainstream school.

Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan follow the arrangements set out in the SEN Code of Practice and associated regulations and are not subject to the general admission arrangements. The School will not take any action that might discourage the admission of any disabled student.

Local Authority staff will continue to be involved in assisting with issues regarding individual placements.

## **10. Transport**

Transport is organised via the Local Authority. Providers employ accessible vehicles where these are necessary to enable access to the school. The LA provide access to additional support, as appropriate and agreed via relevant risk assessment, to ensure that students' reasonable needs can be met.

The LA anticipates that current established practices will continue particularly regarding the partnership between parents, passenger assistants, schools, transport providers and other agencies in order to provide accessible transport for students.

The school also has access to the LA's independent travel training.

A process is being established by the LA to review the transport needs of students with SEN and disabilities linked to normal SEN processes.

## **11. Improving the Provision of Information**

Disabled students and their families or carers are entitled to receive information about their education and the opportunities available to them in a format and language that is appropriate and meaningful to them.

The school will ensure access to Local Authority specialist services to obtain advice and guidance on alternative formats for the presentation of information and the use of computer programmes to produce customised materials, for example for visually impaired children.

The school will ensure that any written information is made available, on request, in various formats to assist any person with sensory impairment.

The school will continue to keep under review the accessibility of all documents that it produces. It will continue to publish its support offer on the website and explain the measures it is taking to promote accessibility to the curriculum and environment by publishing the Accessibility Plan. The website provides information for parents about how they can obtain hard copies of this information should they not have access to the internet.

## 12. The School's Accessibility Plan - Starting Points

Key starting points for the school's plan is assessment of:

- Current student information
- The physical nature of the school
- The school's existing provision

### Student information

The total number of students on the SEN register is 205. Of those, 11 students have EHC Plans and 3 students have statements. Of the 205 students, 48 are in Year 7, 45 in Year 8, 38 in Year 9, 35 in Year 10 and 39 in Year 11.

	Northfield School number of students
Moderate Learning Difficulty	111
SEMH	14
ASD	8
SPLD	25
Physical	7
Hearing Impaired	15
Visually Impaired	8
SLCN	8
Other	6
MSI	1
SLD	1
BESD	1

### The Physical Nature of the School

The school is an open campus establishment dating from 1972. Between 1972 and 2015 there have been a series of building works which have resulted in a revamped sports area, a community sports facility, specialist ICT and dining rooms together with a purpose built library and resource area which opened in 2006, a specialist music and drama facility, opened in 2009 and an Inclusion Base, opened in 2014. The school has extensive playing fields, a specialist floodlit artificial pitch and MUGA.

Following the school's designation as a specialist facility for visually impaired children by an Environmental Audit carried out by the RNIB, an additional specialist facility was created to accommodate visually impaired students. An Access Plan was commissioned and is updated



annually. School policy is to focus on those buildings that are essential for access to disabled students and to target our resources for improvement of them.

### **The School's Existing Provision**

- The main entrance and reception area and areas of the school open to the public are accessible for disabled visitors via ramped areas.
- All doorways throughout the school are wheelchair passable.
- All entrance doors to the main school building and Sports College are accessible by means of electrically operated doors which have been changed in colour from grey to red.
- All internal doors within the sports college have been fitted with electronic push-button controls to facilitate disabled access.
- All offices are dual signed with large print and Braille.
- All internal direction signs are high contrast.
- A lift has been installed to give access to upper floors in the main school and sportsdrome.
- Ramped access is provided to all hard paved play areas, the artificial pitch and playing fields.
- An induction loop system is provided in the sportsdrome.
- Reserved parking spaces are available.
- Accessible toilet facilities are available.
- Lift access to the main hall is available.
- There is specialist flooring throughout the school to aid movement by visually impaired students, including the inclusion of red carpet tiles in the library and resource unit.
- High visibility paint on items such as bollards and pillars aids movement by visually impaired students.
- There is consultation on all internal redecorating projects to ensure appropriate colours to aid visually impaired students.
- The Special Education Needs department assesses and supports those students with a learning difficulty and provides individual or small group support in a dedicated department.
- Registers of those with specific medical conditions, children in the care of the local authority, (LAC), and of those being seen by the SEN departments are kept for staff access on the school's SIMS database.
- Clear and practical advice for all those who might come into contact with any student in need of particular provision is made available via the SEN department and designated staff.
- Specialist provision for visually impaired students within Stockton on Tees is provided by the Visually Impaired department which is made up of a specialist teacher and support staff who have access to appropriate specialised equipment.
- Student awareness of disability is developed through the PSHE programme. Every student participates in this programme.
- Any particular transportation needs to allow access to educational activities outside the school are addressed by the Deputy Headteacher in collaboration with the Community Transport section of Stockton Borough Council.
- CCTV is in operation across the site.

### **13. The School's Accessibility Plan - The Main Priorities**

#### **Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum**

- Access to the sporting and activity elements of the curriculum will be assessed individually and suitable provision made where this is reasonable. Current provision includes coloured equipment, audible balls and foam javelins.

- Close liaison with our feeder primary schools has long been a feature of Northfield School and this will continue to ensure that any students with learning difficulties will be identified in Year 5 so that a cycle of planning and preparation can be put into place. On entry to Northfield School and Sports College students on the SEN register will be assessed and appropriate provision made which will include strategies to enable full access to the curriculum.
- A variety of approaches will be used when planning and delivering the curriculum and these will draw on the different strengths and aptitudes of individual students. Such approaches might include using flexible grouping arrangements including those where students with disabilities can work with their peers, and encouraging peer support by, for example, setting up mentoring arrangements.
- Whole-staff INSET will focus at appropriate times on practical advice on how best to respond to particular needs.
- The school will offer training and support to staff and governors on the requirements of the SEN and Equality Act and how these may be met.
- Medium term plans include holding regular SENCO meetings involving SENCOs from other secondary and primary schools within the borough of Stockton on Tees, the establishment of parent support groups and holding meetings with departments on particular issues.
- Where English is not the first language, The SEN department will liaise with the local authority to ensure the availability of specialist help and advice.
- The school will procure larger monitors for use by VI students.
- The school will investigate fitting textured mattings on landings to support VI student movement around the school.
- The school will investigate painting railings and bollards to support VI student movement around the school.
- The school will continue to develop its strategy for the use of ipads to support students in accessing the curriculum in innovative ways.
- The school will continue to develop its strategy for the engagement and accountability of LSAs in the classroom and supporting students.

#### **14. The School's Accessibility Plan - Making it Happen**

The Governing Body together with the Senior Leadership Team takes responsibility for the school accessibility plan, sets a clear direction for it and supports it financially.

The day to day responsibility for the plan is delegated to the member of SLT responsible, the Director of Business & Finance, in liaison with the SENCo and Curriculum Leader for the Visually Impaired department.

The plan will be reviewed annually and ratified at the Governors SIC Committee. The evaluation of the plan will take into account the findings of staff, parental and student feedback and the views of any external organisations consulted.

The school has made its Accessibility Plan available in the following ways:

- to the Governing Body on paper for approval
- on the school website
- on the school VLE (FROG)
- to external organisations for inspection and comment as required

### **15. Monitoring and Reviewing**

The plan will be reviewed annually over the three year cycle to assess progress in developing and implementing accessibility strategies.