



Hillcrest School & Sixth Form Centre

Accessibility Plan

Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2029

Introduction

This Accessibility Plan has been developed in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and compliments the school's Inclusion and SEND Policy, SEND Information Report and Equality Objectives.

The plan sets out how Hillcrest School & Sixth Form Centre will continue to improve access to education and school life for disabled students by:

- Increasing access to the curriculum.
- Improving the physical environment.
- Improving access to information.

The school is committed to removing barriers to learning, participation and achievement so that all students can access an ambitious education and achieve successful long-term outcomes.

Inclusion at Hillcrest

At Hillcrest School & Sixth Form Centre, our commitment to Work Hard, Be Kind, Aim High underpins all aspects of our inclusive practice. We believe every student has the right to feel valued, included and empowered to achieve their full potential.

We recognise that accessibility extends beyond physical access. It includes:

- Access to learning.
- Access to communication.
- Access to information.
- Access to enrichment opportunities.
- Access to social experiences.
- Access to preparation for adulthood opportunities.

The school seeks to remove barriers through:

- Quality First Teaching.
 - Adaptive teaching approaches.
 - Reasonable adjustments.
 - The Hillcrest Graduated Response.
 - Profile to Practice documentation.
 - Assistive technology.
 - Effective partnerships with families and external agencies.
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Hillcrest School & Sixth Form Centre is an inclusive secondary school and sixth form serving a diverse community within Southwest Birmingham. The school is committed to ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, have equal access to education, enrichment opportunities and preparation for adulthood.

The school recognises that some disabled students and students with additional needs may face barriers to attendance, participation and engagement. Accessibility planning therefore focuses not only on physical access but also on securing full participation, independence, wellbeing, achievement and successful preparation for adulthood.

The school adopts an anticipatory approach to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, seeking to remove barriers before they arise wherever possible. Accessibility considerations are embedded within curriculum design, staff training, pastoral support, site development, digital learning platforms and communication systems to ensure that all students can participate fully in school life.

Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. The definition includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a pupil with disabilities faces in comparison with a pupil without disabilities. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Teaching Learning Accessibility

Current student needs indicate the importance of:

- Adaptive teaching.
- Communication-friendly classrooms.
- Vocabulary pre-teaching.
- Explicit instruction.
- Scaffolding.
- Visual supports.
- Assistive technology.

These approaches are embedded through the school's Graduated Response and Profile to Practice Framework.

Vulnerability and Inclusion

The school serves a diverse community with a significant proportion of students experiencing one or more factors associated with educational vulnerability. Current school data indicates high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, with 56.8% of students eligible for Student Premium and 60.2% eligible for Free School Meals. In addition, 44.7% of students are identified as having English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The school recognises that barriers to participation and achievement are often influenced by the intersection of multiple factors rather than a single characteristic. Current analysis identifies students who are both eligible for Free School Meals and have EAL as the largest overlapping vulnerability group. These students may experience additional barriers relating to attainment, attendance, access to enrichment opportunities and engagement with support services.

The school also recognises that students with SEND may experience overlapping vulnerabilities, including disadvantage, attendance concerns, social and emotional needs, safeguarding concerns or challenges associated with English language acquisition. Accessibility planning therefore adopts a holistic approach, focusing on the removal of barriers to learning, participation and inclusion rather than viewing need through a single lens. The school also recognises the needs of young carers and their families and will seek to identify and remove barriers to participation, communication, attendance and engagement wherever these are identified.

The school is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of background, disability, SEND, language proficiency or additional vulnerability, can participate fully in the academic, social and wider life of the school and are supported to achieve positive outcomes and successful preparation for adulthood.

Attendance and Participation

The school recognises that some vulnerable students may experience barriers to regular attendance and participation. Supporting engagement, attendance and inclusion therefore form part of the school's accessibility planning.

Physical Access

The school currently has a relatively small number of students requiring significant physical adaptations; however, the school recognises its anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to plan for both current and future need. Physical accessibility is therefore considered proactively rather than reactively.

The school maintains procedures for risk assessment, personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs), medical needs planning and individual accessibility arrangements where required. Accessibility planning includes ongoing review of:

- Building access and circulation routes.
- Specialist teaching spaces.
- Toilets and personal care facilities.
- Emergency evacuation arrangements.
- Sensory and environmental accessibility.
- Specialist equipment requirements.

The school aims to ensure that students with disabilities can access all educational, social and enrichment opportunities alongside their peers wherever reasonably possible.

Digital Accessibility

Digital technology forms an increasingly important part of teaching, learning and communication across the school. The school recognises that accessibility barriers can arise when students are unable to access digital content, online platforms or communication systems independently.

The school therefore utilises a range of accessibility tools and adaptive technologies to support participation and independence, including:

- Assistive technology.
- Text-to-speech and speech-to-text software.
- Immersive Reader and accessibility features.
- Visual supports and adapted digital resources.
- Translation and communication support where appropriate.
- Accessibility features within school learning platforms.

These approaches support students with SEND, students with literacy difficulties, students with physical or sensory needs and those at earlier stages of English language acquisition. The school will continue to review emerging technology and digital accessibility standards to ensure information remains accessible to students, families and stakeholders

Accessibility Objectives 2026-2029

The school will:

1. Ensure all students with disabilities can access an ambitious curriculum.
2. Improve participation and achievement for SEND students, particularly those with ASC and communication needs.
3. Strengthen accessibility for students with EAL and overlapping vulnerabilities.
4. Continue to develop a physically accessible and sensory-aware environment.
5. Improve access to information through technology and accessible communication methods.
6. Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
7. Promote independence and preparation for adulthood for students with disabilities.

Action Plan 2026-2029

This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Area 1: Increasing Access to the Curriculum

Priority	Evidence / Context	Actions	Success Criteria	Review
Adaptive Teaching	75 students are identified with SEND, including 5 students with EHCPs. Students present with needs across all four areas of SEND, with ASC, SLCN, SEMH and multiple needs represented across the school profile.	Continue to develop adaptive teaching through the Profile to Practice Framework, quality assurance processes and staff training.	Learning walks, work scrutiny and student voice demonstrate effective access to learning for students with SEND.	Annual
Autism-Friendly Practice	Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is the most common primary SEND need.	Further develop autism-friendly and sensory-aware environments through staff training, environmental review and reasonable adjustments.	Evidence from learning walks, student voice and SEND reviews demonstrates that reasonable adjustments are implemented consistently to support students with ASC.	Annual
Communication and Language	Significant numbers of students present with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and multiple needs.	Develop communication-friendly classrooms, vocabulary instruction, visual supports and targeted interventions.	Improved student engagement, confidence and access to learning.	Annual

EAL and Language Acquisition	281 students are identified as EAL. Many speak English confidently; students requiring support are assessed using the Bell Foundation framework and receive targeted intervention where required.	Use assessment-informed language support, phonics and numeracy intervention, adaptive teaching and assistive technology to improve curriculum access and independence.	Students requiring language support demonstrate increased independence and curriculum participation.	Annual
Attendance, Inclusion and Participation	FSM and EAL students represent the largest overlapping vulnerability group within the school.	Strengthen attendance, inclusion and pastoral support through early identification and targeted intervention.	Attendance, participation and student voice evidence demonstrate positive engagement and inclusion for vulnerable groups.	Annual
Staff Development	The school's SEND strategy emphasises adaptive teaching, Profile to Practice and continuous professional development.	Deliver ongoing SEND, accessibility and adaptive teaching CPD.	Staff demonstrate confidence in implementing reasonable adjustments and adaptive teaching strategies.	Annual

Area 2: Improving the Physical Environment

Priority	Actions	Success Criteria	Review
Accessibility Audits	Conduct annual accessibility reviews of the school environment and equipment.	Physical barriers identified and addressed where reasonable.	Annually
Sensory Environment	Continue to review sensory needs within classrooms and shared spaces.	Learning environments support participation and inclusion.	Annually
Emergency Planning	Review risk assessments and PEEPs.	Appropriate arrangements remain in place for disabled students.	Annually

Area 3: Improving Access to Information

Priority	Evidence / Context	Actions	Success Criteria	Review
Digital Accessibility	Digital technology plays a significant role in teaching, learning and communication.	Expand use of assistive technology, accessibility software and accessible digital communication practices.	Students can access digital learning and information more independently.	Annual
Accessible Information	Information must be accessible to students, parents, carers and stakeholders.	Provide information in alternative formats and translated formats where required. Ensure information, meetings, consultation events and school communications are accessible to parents and carers with disabilities or long-term health conditions.	Pupils, parents, carers and stakeholders can access information in formats appropriate to their needs and engage fully with school communications and events.	Annual

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Accessibility Plan will be monitored annually by:

- Headteacher
- Assistant Headteacher / SENDCo
- Senior Leadership Team
- Governors

Progress will be evaluated through:

- SEND outcomes
- Attendance data
- Parent and student voice
- Accessibility audits
- Learning walks and curriculum reviews
- Complaints and feedback analysis

Progress against the plan will be reported to Governors annually and inform future revisions of the school's SEND provision, Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan.

The plan will be fully reviewed in September 2029.