Hillcrest School & Sixth Form Centre

Accessibility Plan

Date agreed: 15TH October 2024

Review date: July 2027

Developed by: Ms. Catherine Jacobs (Assistant Headteacher - SENDCo)

Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre: Context

Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre is a high-performing, standalone. Secondary Academy and small Sixth Form Centre, with over 660 students on roll. We are geographically located in South West Birmingham, in an area that borders Bartley Green and Woodgate Valley.

Our key stage 3 and key stage 4 secondary school is known as Hillcrest School. We have an intake of 120 students per year group (7-11). Hillcrest Sixth Form welcomes 50 students; this number is strategically modest, as part of the Sixth Form's unique selling point for post-16 students; the A-level programmes have small groups.

Life at Hillcrest School and Sixth Form is both exciting and rewarding. Our strong academic approach ensures the development of young people to be equipped with the right knowledge for life, alongside a holistic pastoral programme, enabling skills for the future for all of our students, regardless of ability and aptitude.

We have an ethos built around high expectations and high aspirations, with enrichment activities combined with academic excellence forming our recipe for success; we see this as paramount to life at our school. Not only do these activities help to mould our students into well-rounded citizens but also encourages a sense of pride and belonging within the community in which we work.

OUR VALUES AND ETHOS:

Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre is a safe and respectful learning environment where every child is valued as an individual with unique talents and ambitions.

We:

- Are an outward looking and confident community, actively promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Are a happy, responsible and fait school respected by the community.
- Improve our environment to meet the educational demands of the twenty-first century.
- Raise expectations and achievement for all
- Prepare everyone for the challenges of modern Britain and a changing world; and
- Develop a passion for life-long learning

We believe our school is an ideal size, since it is large enough to provide a full range of subjects and to enable us to employ specialist teachers, but not so large that the individual becomes lost in the crowd.

Hillcrest is committed to ensuring all members of our learning community have equal opportunities to achieve their potential.

Accessibility Planning Aims

Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre aims to deliver an ambitious vision for students with disabilities, that is demonstrated by all staff.

Our school aims to ensure that students with disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points, through flexible quality first teaching; incorporating adaptations and modifications to enable access and interventions, where appropriate.

Our school aims to 'level the playing field' for those with disabilities and strives to provide appropriate, well considered support that is delivered seamlessly across all teaching, learning and social situations - maximising independence.

Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010, to produce an Accessibility Plan.

The purpose of the plan is to fulfil the following:
- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

Our school therefore aims to treat all students fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all students without discrimination of any kind.

Objectives

All staff will demonstrate knowledge of equality legislation in relation to students, staff and visitors with disabilities and understand their role in implementing it. All staff will have a 'can do' attitude underpinned by a collaborative, problem-solving, solution-focused approach to new challenges, as they arise.

Our school will have systems in place that support the access and inclusion of students with disabilities e.g. Risk Assessments, Moving and Handling Plans, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans, Individual Healthcare Plans, One Page Profiles, bespoke Careers plans etc. Our school will continue to improve the physical school environment and facilities to enable students with complex physical needs and/or disabilities to fully access all aspects of school life.

School and Student Data Analysis

Current (June 2023) student data shows that during this academic year [2023/24] there are a total of 77 students identified as SEN/D on our school's SEN/D register.

Students on roll total: 661

Year group	Students on roll	SEN/D	Percentage %	EHCP
7	122	17	13.9	1
8	122	16	13.1	2
9	120	15	12.5	0
10	120	13	10.8	1
11	121	14	11.6	0
12	23	0	0	0
13	29	0	0	0
14	4	2	50	0

Student data is collated according to primary area of need, but for some students this is more challenging as they have co-existing conditions or areas of need. To reflect this complexity and map the multiple impacts of disabilities on students, the following table further analyses the needs of the student population (identified as disabled) in terms of overlapping conditions, and their impact on SEMH and attendance.

Area of Need	Number of students where…			
	This is their primary area of need	**This is their primary area of need, but also has additional co-existing conditions**	**There is an impact on SEMH**	**There is an impact on Attendance**
Physical disability/ies	2	2	1	0
Long term, complex or fluctuating/ degenerative medical needs	5	1	2	2
Sensory support needs	Vision: 2 Hearing: 1 MSI: 0	1	2	2
Autism	17	8	6	6
Speech, language, and communication needs	13	11	9	11
Cognition and learning needs	10	10	8	4
Social, emotional and/or mental health needs	27	5	-	19

What the data tells us

Of the 77 students identified as SEN/D, **42 students are regarded as disabled** under the definition within the Equality Act 2010; This is 6.4% of the total students on roll at Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre.

When considering cognition and learning needs (10) 13% have this identified, as their primary disability. This therefore suggests that successful access to curriculum will form a notable feature in their provision and accessibility needs; supplementary adult-led support, differentiated assessment, intervention and curriculum pathways will be of benefit to ensure positive progress, outcomes and transition to the next steps in their learning journey.

There is clear presentation of additional challenge, due to co-existing conditions, across the areas of need; (38) 49% of students identified as SEND at Hillcrest, also have existing difficulties/differences, beyond their identified primary SEND need.

Further to this, prevalence of SEMH in student needs is high - 35% of identified SEND (77). Within the cohort of SEND that are identified as disabled (42) 67% of these students have an identified SEMH difficulty. It is important to note that SEMH is identified in this context as a co-existing part of the students' needs rather than as a direct impact of their disability – none of our students identify or report their primary barriers or disabilities as the cause of vicarious SEMH (unless their primary disability is identified as SEMH).

Further work is required to investigate whether SEMH needs are directly linked with school attendance. Ongoing liaison between the Learner Support and Pastoral team will provide potential next steps when considering appropriate provision for these students - either as individuals or as a group, e.g. they may benefit from supplementary work/College placements, alternative curriculum pathway, strategic mentoring programmes or Family Support intervention - to encourage consistent access to school.

Consultation with Stakeholders

At Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre, we ensure that we consult with our stakeholders around accessibility planning. This includes consultation with staff, students, parents/carers, governors and the wider community. The consultation ensures that the views of ALL are taken into consideration and the plan modified where reasonable to meet the needs of stakeholders.

This Accessibility Plan has been written in consultation with:

SLT
Headteacher – Ms. Julie-Ann Davis
Deputy Headteacher – Mr Sam Abbotts
Deputy Headteacher – Mr Steve Connor-Hemming
Assistant Headteacher – Mrs. Shamim Palmer
Business Manager – Mrs. Sharron Johnson

Middle Leaders/Specialist Staff
Head of English – Mrs. Rebecca Drury
Headv of Maths – Mr Josh Gaff
Head of Science – Mrs. Rupinder Kaur
Head of Geography – Mr Logan Gregory
Head of Life Skills – Miss Rachel Glendening
Head of Art – Mr Andy Featon
Teacher of Science – Mr Frank Gale
2nd in Maths – Mr Mark Gilman
Maintenance Manager – Ms. Lorraine Hopkins
IT Team – Mr. Dave Job/Mr. Shane Thompson
Examinations Officer – Mr. Dylan Key
Deputy DSL/Senior Learning Mentor – Mrs. Mary Bunce
Lead Practitioner HLTA – Mrs. Katie Hughes
Lead Practitioner HLTA – Miss Chanel Hill
SEND TA – Miss Sherelle Monroe-Zaman

Governor(s)
Staff Governor – Mr Donovan James

External
FCB Architects
Pupil and Schools Support Service – Mrs. Kerry Riches-Orme
Communication and Autism Team – Mrs. Denise Horton
Educational Psychology Service – Mrs. Carrie Stewart-Watkins
Occupational Therapy Team – Mr. Gordon Heath

Parents/Students
Parents – Parent Voice (DLP 2023/24)
Students – Student Voice (DLP 2023/24)

The consultation process involved:

- Staff consultation meeting(s)

- Parent/carer voice response
- Pupil voice activity
- Meeting(s) with SLT
- Whole School policy updates
- Meetings with Middle Leaders/Specialist staff
- Specialist SEND staff observations – SEND students
- Learning walks – SLT/External agencies
- Meeting(s) with Governing members
- Guidance from architects and Local Authority agency – email/telephone call(s)
- SEN/D Quality Assurance, whole school reviewing (PSS – audit tool)
- Occupational Therapy Sensory Audit – NHS/Birmingham Local Authority

Access to the Curriculum

At Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre, we strive to enable access to the curriculum for students with a disability. The following statements outline the range of strategies we use to help achieve this:

- At Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre, students with disabilities have access to the full curriculum and, where necessary, this is tailored to best suit their individual needs.
- Adaptations may be necessary to ensure that students with a disability are able to equally access the curriculum alongside their peers via appropriate teaching and learning opportunities.
- School interrogates and analyses data to monitor the attainment and progress of all students, including those with disabilities.
- Where a student does have additional educational needs then they are able to access learning interventions alongside their peers.
- Staff are deployed, as appropriate, to support students to access the curriculum.
- Staff understand the needs of individual students and how to best support access to the curriculum; they make explicit use of the individual One Page Profiles, for the students that they teach.
- Staff understand the need to balance the support provided with the need to maximise the student's independence. Whenever possible, staff facilitate independent access to the curriculum.
- Our School uses a number of strategies and programmes to support the inclusion of students with disabilities e.g. use of visual timetables, task boards, time-out/medical pass and comic strip conversations.
- Our School provides strategic CPD/staff training in accordance with the needs of our students with identified disabilities e.g. AET 'Making sense of Autism', whole school CPD

Students are supported to access the benefits, services and facilities as part of the wider curriculum offered by our School. The range of strategies used to help achieve this access are:

- Effective use of IT aids, equipment and resources to support access for students with a physical disability by providing:
- Portable appropriately sized laptop or tablet
- Appropriate positioning of equipment for ease of use
- Appropriately sized screens/specialist keyboards/whiteboards/adapted mice etc
- Specialist touch typing training and intervention (PDSS team, Birmingham Local Authority)
- Specialist speech to text software e.g. Read, Write Gold
- Specialist text to speech software and equipment e.g. Reading Pen; Staff ensure that any equipment used by the student is readily available for use in lessons or elsewhere, as required.

Equipment to support access to the curriculum, in particular responding to the curriculum, is available for students with associated speech, language and communication needs. This includes:
- PSS Toolkit Assessment/diagnostic tools
- Task boards/tick lists (HQT strategies)
- 5 point scale
- Social stories/Comic strip conversations
- Communication books/boards

- Picture News: Learner Support led intervention
- Lego Therapy: Learner Support led intervention
- Precision Teaching – Learner Support led intervention
- Lexia Programme – Whole school Reading Lead Teacher
- Flash Academy – Learner Support led intervention

Time out of class/absence management

Our School acknowledges that students with a disability may require time out of class for a number of valid reasons, including:
- Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy programmes delivered by specialist staff, on-site
- appointments with visiting healthcare professionals in school e.g. physiotherapist, occupational therapist, specialist nurse, Access to Education teachers (Birmingham Local Authority)
- Increased likelihood of the need to access therapeutic interventions e.g. mentoring, counselling, pastoral support sessions

Our School acknowledges that students with a disability may require time out of school for a number of valid reasons, including:
- To attend healthcare appointments
- Increased likelihood of absence due to ill health
- Absence due to surgery or medical procedure.

Our School has strategies in place to ensure that the student accesses the content of the curriculum that has been missed e.g. Use of the whole school Class Charts platform for set tasks/missed tasks. Our School ensures that the student's absence record takes into account medical needs and the pupil is not unduly penalised (e.g. Getting it Right system)

Assessment and Examinations
Staff make reasonable adjustments to tests, examinations and assessment tasks to enable students with disabilities to access them. As required, examination access arrangements (pre-examination adjustments for candidates sitting formal examinations such as GCSEs, A Levels etc) are arranged under JCQ rules and put in place for students with a disability. Arrangements are based on evidence of need and normal way of working e.g. extra time, practical assistance.

Challenging areas of the curriculum
- Students with disabilities are able to fully access and participate in all aspects of the PE curriculum
- Adjustments and adaptations are made to enable full participation on an individual basis, in accordance with the students individual One Page Profile
- If appropriate, a student risk assessment that identifies specific areas of support, will be put in place.
- Students with disabilities are able to fully access and participate in the school Sports Day.

Our School supports all students to access all aspects of school life, including access to the wider curriculum e.g. extra-curricular clubs, after-school and Creative clubs and off-site trips, visits and residentials.
- Students with disabilities are able to access all off-site visits and events due to careful advance planning by staff. Visits and events are planned individually to take in to account the needs of attending students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are able to access extra-curricular clubs and after-school clubs due to careful planning by staff.
- Barriers and challenges to participation are analysed using a risk assessment proforma and action is taken to minimise or reduce those identified risks using a solution-focused approach.
- Sports Day will be adapted to include activities accessible for all including students with a physical disability who may use mobility aids or equipment e.g. power or manual wheelchairs, walking frame.
- A student specific risk assessment is completed (where required) for all off-site trips and visits in addition to the class/ group generic risk assessment.
- Accessible coaches/alternative transport options will be arranged for trips involving students with disabilities.

Access to the Physical Environment

At Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre we strive to enable access to the physical environment for students with a disability. The following statements outline the range of strategies we use to help achieve this:

- The School site complies with the Planning and Building Regulations: Part M.
- The School recognises that compliance does not guarantee that the site is accessible for students with complex needs and recognises the need to be anticipatory in terms of meeting future such needs
- Students with disabilities have good access to the majority of the School site, achieved by a long-term strategy of investment in building accessibility.
- The School undertakes a full buildings accessibility audit every three years as part of the process of reviewing the Accessibility Plan.
- The Site Team, SENDCo, SLT and students (if appropriate) are encouraged to carry out regular walks around the site to review physical accessibility.
- The School consults the following stakeholders around changes to improve access to the physical environment: students, parents/carers, specialist services, disability legislation, local community network links, Governors, local authority.

Mobility and moving around School
- The majority of the school site is accessible to all students with disabilities, including those with physical disabilities who use mobility equipment such as a powerchair, manual wheelchair and walker.
- Students are able to access upper floors either independently or with support, using the lift(s) on site.
- Staff encourage students with disabilities to move around the site as independently as is possible.

Risk Assessment For an individual student with disabilities
Access to the site is supported by a comprehensive risk assessment that covers the following indoor and outdoor environment areas of the school:
- Access to the site
- reception/main entrance
- Student entrance
- Student reception
- Classrooms
- Specialist subject areas e.g. workshop, lab etc.
- Intervention areas
- Calm spaces and withdrawal areas
- Corridors
- Canteen
- Sports hall
- PE changing areas
- Locker areas
- Toilets
- Medical room
- Outdoor pathways and playground

Access to Information

At Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre we strive to enable access to information for students with a disability. The following statements outline the range of strategies we use to help achieve this:

- The School provides information in alternative formats e.g. plain English, use of visuals and symbols.
- The School provides greater access using software such as, 'Communicate in Print'.
- The School informs people how they can access information in other formats such as audio files, video files and can produce translated provision if requested, within a reasonable time frame.
- The School utilises technology to share information in a variety of formats e.g. social media, apps etc.
- The School utilises technology to share information with students e.g. Class Charts, Studybugs, apps, Sparx, Seneca.
- All students who require it, have been issued with a School laptop to enable full access to online learning platforms at home.
- Learner Support staff have created self-help resources, in order to support students to independently access their learning technology.
- Read write gold
- Colour printng for EAL/SEND learners, where necessary
- Universal software such as Windows – magnifier, text to talk
- Flash Academy and Lexia programmes for access to learning needs
- Availability of adapted resources such as keyboard/mouse
- Acceptable user policies and curriculum time explicitly dedicated to online safety (Life Skills)

Accessibility Action Plan

Area 1: To increase the extent to which students with disabilities can participate in the school curriculum

Target 1: Access to adapted/Functional Curriculum courses				
Action/ Strategies	**Resource Implications**	**Timescale**	**Responsibility**	**Success Criteria**
Consideration for alternative functional pathways, to supplement the program of study for students with identified cognition and learning needs.	Curriculum Assessment Staffing Timetabling	July '27	Assistant Headteacher – Curriculum and Assessment Assistant Headteacher - SENDCo Heads of Dpt.	Introduction of alternative functional pathways in Maths, English and/or science GCSE for students with cognition and learning needs
Target 2: Reduction in environmental visual clutter				
Use information and recommendations of C-SENSE audit (May '24) to 'de-clutter' the visual environment in classrooms and corridors; reducing sensory stimulus and potential for over-stimulation.	Time (teachers/support staff) Site team availability – additional cleaners to alleviate site staff Budget PD Agency audit(s)	July '25	SENDCo SLT Facilities Manager Site team Heads of Dpt.	Focused, meaningful curriculum display Standardised departmental visual information Synthesised/purposeful whole school display information Increased student focus (Class Charts)
Target 3: Maths Manipulatives				
Enhance access to numeracy, foundation skills and maths curriculum, through the effective use of strategic maths manipulatives.	PD Budget Curriculum updates	Jan '26	SENDCo Assistant Principal Curriculum and assessment Head of Maths Maths team Learner Support team	Improved assessment outcomes Developing dialogue of the language of maths in the classroom (observation) Student voice – increased positivity of maths knowledge Student engagement

			Lead Practitioner: Cognition and Learning	

Target 4: Immersive reader/universal accessibility software

For all students to maximise their access to IT resources, using Immersive Reader	Time Budget training	July '25		Immersive Reader embedded on all students and staff log-ins

Area 2: To improve the physical environment of the school to ensure disabled pupils can access all benefits, services and facilities offered by the school

Target 1: Supervised Calm Space (unstructured time)

Action/ Strategies	Resource Implications	Times cale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Review strategic Calm Spaces / Withdrawal Area/Reflection room – consider introduction of universal 'regulation stations'	Continue to include sensory provision and emotional regulatory support in any estates evaluation. Staffing availability for supervising students during unstructured time Rooms – accessible, appropriate safe spaces	Sept'25	Assistant Headteacher – SENDCo Deputy Head/DSL Support staff Teaching staff	Establish explicit Calm Area(s) where students with sensory disabilities and/or SEMH needs, can de-escalate independently or work, without disturbance and with supervision Updates to policy

Target 2: Permanent, accessible ramp (Science/DT)

Action/ Strategies	Resource Implications	Times cale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Review Accessibility between Science and DT block for anyone with a Mobility impairment/disability	Consideration for permanent accessible ramp Budget/bid	Sept'26	SENDCo Facilities Manager Headteacher Business Manager	Costings for the development of Safe, Unrestricted Access into premises with None/Minimal assistance

Target 3: Automated Entrances/timings

Action/ Strategies	Resource Implications	Times cale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Assess requirement of Automated Doors to Main Entrance and Student Entrance	Consideration to entrance upgrades, for independent access - visitors/staff/students (in accordance with building regulations)	Sept'27	SENDCo Facilities Manager Headteacher Business Manager	Costings for the development of Safe, unrestricted Access into premises with None/Minimal assistance

Target 4: Updating decoration to walls/radiators

Action/ Strategies	Resource Implications	Times cale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Recommendations from the C-SENSE audit to create contrast in colour between radiator/walls – for sensory safety Classroom/corridor walls/carpets/flooring/lighting to be	budget Time Staffing	January '26	Site Staff SLT SENDCo	Contrasting colours between radiators and walls Visually supportive LED lighting Carpets in all classrooms Classroom walls painted in muted colours – any damage, addressed

acoustically and visually equitable for sensory impairment needs (Vision/Hearing)

Continue to include sensory provision and emotional regulatory support in any estates evaluation. | | 13 | | Appropriate black out blinds and general window coverage for glare/vision needs |

Area 3: To improve the delivery of information to disabled students so information is available equally to all students

Target 1:				
Action/ Strategies	**Resource Implications**	**Timescale**	**Responsibility**	**Success Criteria**
Anticipatory assessment of specialist hearing equipment (main hall) and incorporate into appropriate budget	Budget allocation for Hearing Loop with various compatibility modes. Liaison with specialist agency for Hearing disabilities/Site/IT	Sept'27	SENDCo Teaching staff Headteacher IT staff Learner Support staff	Research and cost software for supplementary curriculum 'language' for students with disabilities Independent access to extra-curricular and well-being curriculum for sensory impairments
Target 2: Increased universal accessibility to IT equipment				
Introduction of immersive reader (windows) across the school network/website	IT platform Time Budget	January '26	SENDCo Learner Support Staff SLT IT staff	Greater independent access to information for stakeholders Increased parental engagement in information shared
Target 3: Review of assistive technology and its effective use				
Opportunity for specific CPD/staff training with reference to increasing requirement for assistive technology	CPD programme Time Specialist support from PSS/SALT	July '26	SENDCo IT staff Lead Practitioners/EAL Lead	Increased staff knowledge of assistive technology and its use Clear procedure and routines for issue, use and evaluation of use Greater accessibility to curriculum using assistive technology

Sources of information that inform the plan:

The Equalities Act, 2010:
- You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.
- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection
- A progressive condition is one that gets worse over time. People with progressive conditions can be classed as disabled. However, you automatically meet the disability definition under the Equality Act 2010 from the day you're diagnosed with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:
- Equality Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- SEN/D Code of Practice (2015)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Birmingham City Council, BSF Appendix E Document (AST-AR-FCB-SP-X-005)
- Occupational Therapy C-Sense Audit – Report (May 2024)
- SEN/D Information Report
- Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre SEN/D Policy
- Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre Exam Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy
- Acceptable use - IT

The following Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Design guidance references, standards and legislation have been referred to:

- Building Regulations Part M and Approved Document M 9ADM), 2004 with due consideration given to Part B and Approved Document B
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA)
- British Standard BS8300:2001 "Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people".
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Building Bulletin 102: Designing for disabled children and children with special educational needs.
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA)

Reading references:

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