



# Accessibility Plan 2021-22

**Date Policy due to be reviewed: September 2022**

**Committee Responsible for Policy: Full Governing Body Committee**

**Our SEND policy forms part of the Birmingham Local Offer for learners with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, January 2015. In accordance with the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2014), Hillcrest School has 'high aspirations and expectations for children and young people with SEND'.**

## **Accessibility Provision and Plan 2021-22**

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education and required schools to produce Accessibility Plans every three years. In 2010, the Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation. The Equality Act (2010) placed a legal obligation on all schools, making it unlawful to discriminate against students, staff, parents, governors and visitors, with a disability.

Under this guidance the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled students:

- Not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled students.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled students in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum to ensure that students with a disability are as equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied students in the school. This covers learning and teaching and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure activities or school visits;
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- Improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is provided in writing for students who are not disabled. It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. The plan will also review ways to assist students with Special Educational needs who would not be classified as disabled under the Equality Act. For such students the school has a responsibility to meet their special needs, and for those classified as disabled, a duty to prevent discrimination against them in their access to education. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as a person with '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'.

The Act defines 'substantial' as 'more than minor or trivial' and 'long term' as 'has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months'.

The Act states that an impairment is to be taken to affect the ability of a person to carry out normal day to day activities only if it affects that person in respect to one or more of the following:

- 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 the risk of physical danger

## **The purpose and direction of the school's provision: vision and values**

Hillcrest School has a strong family ethos and we wish to assist all students to reach their full potential. We value the diversity of our school community and appreciate the contribution that students with special educational needs and / or disabilities can bring to school life.

We aim to work together with parents and carers to remove barriers to learning that prevent students participating fully in school life. We have high ambitions for all of our students including any of our students who may be disabled, and we expect them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life.

We believe that all students have the right to be actively included in the life of the school. Our staff are committed to the inclusion of all students. We therefore:

- Value every individual and celebrate their achievements;
- Identify and respond to individual needs;
- Identify and overcome all potential barriers to learning;
- Set multiple learning challenges for every student.

All members of the school community should be aware of the Equality Act (2010) and its application to schools.

Our priorities are to ensure that:

- All staff are fully aware of the obligation to provide an inclusive curriculum.
- All policies on review are revised as necessary to take account of the disability legislation
- We consult with parents/carers, students, staff, governors and other agencies about priorities for increasing access to the curriculum.

We take a fully inclusive approach to our staff recruitment and aim to appoint the best person based on their skill set and qualifications regardless of any disability he/she might have. We actively implement the school's equal opportunity policy for staff in the day to day management of the school. All staff are provided with the necessary support for their roles. We regularly review our staff's needs to ensure these are being met.

## **Admissions - Welcoming and preparing for disabled students**

We have an Admissions policy and criteria (available to view on our website) which seeks to remove barriers to entry to our school for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The support we provide for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities can also be found in our 'SEND Local Offer' (available to view on our website)

The Admissions policy ensures we conduct admissions on a fair and non-discriminatory basis.

Where it is practical to make reasonable adjustments to enable prospective students to take up a place at Hillcrest School and to satisfy the current admissions criteria, we are committed to providing those reasonable adjustments, as outlined in the Equality Act (2010) and Part 3 of the Children and Families Bill (2014).

In order to fully meet the needs of disabled students, we require complete disclosure of information prior to entry from parents / carers and previous schools. We will ask all applicants for admission to say whether they have received any previous support, have had an educational psychologist's report or have any disability or other condition of which the school should be aware.

Parents / Carers of a student with a special educational need and/or a disability should provide the school with full details prior to the admissions procedure, at registration, or subsequently before accepting the offer of a place at Hillcrest. We require this information so that, in the case of a student with a particular need, we can assess those needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can be reasonably made to ensure that the application procedure is accessible for the student and that we can cater adequately for the student should an offer of a place be made.

In assessing the student or prospective student, we may need to take further advice and request assessments as appropriate from external agencies. We will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality at all stages.

We will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the information and application procedure is accessible for disabled candidates and will make such reasonable adjustments as necessary. For example, we may be able to provide an examination paper in large font for a visually impaired student.

If special educational needs and/or a disability becomes apparent after admission, we will consult with parents / carers about reasonable adjustments in order to allow the student to continue in the school.

The school's policies on SEND, Discrimination, LAC, EAL and Equal Opportunities are available on the school website.

### **External Examinations (GCSE, GCE) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**

If your child has adjustments to support them to access learning in school, we will make an application to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) to gain permission to allow them to have these adjustments in their external GCSE, GCE, BTEC, Vocational and Entry Level examinations.

For most adjustments your child will need to be assessed by a qualified professional to prove their learning difficulties and/or disabilities meet the threshold set by JCQ. This assessment will usually take place during Year 10. Examples of adjustments that JCQ might allow are:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time to complete examinations
- A reader to read questions
- A scribe to write their answers
- Use of a word processor with spell / grammar checks turned off

The use of a word processor might be allowed if it is an adjustment your child has been allowed in their lessons and is their normal way of working. This might have been put in place if your child has issues with vision, the speed or legibility of their handwriting for instance.

**The use of a word processor in examinations is not always an advantage to students and some students find it hinders them. However, if it has been their normal way of producing written work in school and they are proficient in using a word processor we would consider allowing the use of a word processor in examinations. We would need to be sure typing supports a student to produce written work more effectively and at a speed that improves on their handwriting speed. School will always make this decision in consultation with students and their parents / carers based on evidence of students normal use of a word processor.**

### **Views of those consulted during the development of our provision**

Parents have the opportunity to feedback to the school on a range of issues at our termly progress review meetings and annual parent's evenings. Feedback received from the questionnaires is used to inform future planning for subject specific and whole school developments. For those students identified with a special educational need and/or a disability, we consult with the individual parent/carer to seek their views on their student's specific needs, both physical and sensory. This process is completed as part of our annual IEP review process and EHC Plan reviews.

## **The main priorities of the school's Accessibility Provision**

### **Priority 1: Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum**

#### **Summary of the current position:**

- All SEND students are identified to staff at the start of and throughout the academic year.
- All SEND students contribute to preparing a staff information card outlining appropriate teaching strategies. The cards are updated and shared with staff at the start of each term.
- The curriculum is fully inclusive and appropriate support is provided to all students at key transitional stages, i.e. Options choices, IAG consultations
- Resources available in different formats for students with specific needs, i.e. visual impairment
- Under-achievement of SEND students is systematically tracked and appropriate interventions put in place in the classroom and as part of wider support programmes.
- Teaching Assistants are allocated to work in and out of lessons with targeted SEND students.
- Specific learning programmes are used to support under-achieving SEND students.
- We have a wide range of extra-curricular activities and all students, irrespective of any impairments or disabilities, are encouraged to take part. This includes school trips and residential visits where support would be available to ensure that all students had the same opportunities.
- Parents / Carers of SEND students attend annual reviews.
- The use of outside agencies for support, advice and training is sought to ensure that TAs, teachers and parents / carers can be advised effectively.
- Special access arrangements made for examinations as appropriate.
- Flexibility to modify timetables to ensure students with disabilities are taught in rooms on the first floor or close to lift facilities on the second and third floors.
- Regular reviews of 'Health Plans' to keep staff with up to date information on specific medical and physical needs.
- Daily access to support from Learning Mentors and SEND staff in the Learning Support rooms each day.

### **Priority 2 – Improving the physical environment to increase the extent to which disabled students can take full advantage of education and associated services**

#### **Summary of the current position:**

- All buildings are wheelchair accessible by ramps with non-slip corduroy tiles
- There is at least one accessible classroom in each subject area
- All levels in each building are accessible by lift
- A platform lift ensures students and visitors can access the main reception area, main hall and dining room. This lift has rails on three sides and brailled signs.
- All internal stairs are fitted with hand rails
- There are two wheelchair users' toilets in the school fitted with a panic alarm
- All toilets have been upgraded and have non slip floors and clear contrast between basins and their surrounds. Toilets located on the first floor in both parts of the building.
- Designated 'Health and well-being room' with toilet and washing facilities.
- Designated shower room and bathing facilities located close to main reception
- Corridors in most parts of the school are wide and accessible for all students
- Lighting, blinds and colour schemes used to decorate classrooms improve visibility for visually impaired students.

- There is clear visual signage in all buildings, i.e. – signs for fire exits, toilets
- There is significant colour contrast between door and door frames throughout all school buildings
- The main school hall is equipped with an audio visual system
- The sports hall and gym is accessible to students through the use of a platform lift.
- All key support rooms are located in close proximity on the first floor of the main building – student reception, the Zone, SEND office and the Learning Support Room
- There are disabled parking spaces on the school site

**Priority 3** – Improving the delivery to disabled students of information that is provided in writing for students who are not disabled

Summary of the current position:

- Effective use of adjusted materials to support students with specific SEND needs, i.e. large easy read print, worksheets on coloured paper, coloured overlays, reading rulers.
- Resourcing laptops for targeted SEND students
- Effective first wave teaching with targeted TA support as necessary
- Purchase of appropriate reading materials through the Accelerated Reading Scheme to meet the needs of all students
- Examination papers and controlled assessment documentation provided in different formats
- Access to on-line support materials, i.e. Hegarty Maths, Active Learn
- Effective use of Teaching Assistants for pre-tutoring programmes
- Continuous staff training to provide guidance on specific SEND issues, e.g. dyslexia , ASD

### **Reviewing – Management, co-ordination and implementation**

The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) and SENCO are responsible for the regular review of provision across the school. As appropriate this review will include other members of the SLT and Governors. This work will include:

- The annual review of the school's policies, procedures and facilities as they are likely to affect students and prospective students with disabilities.
- To make recommendations with a view of improving the accessibility of its education by means of reasonable adjustments to the learning and physical environment.
- The preparation of the school's SEND and Equal Opportunity policies.
- The preparation and review of the school's Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan is reviewed by the Governing Body every three years or more frequently if a specific new issue arises. Any changes required to structures or physical changes to the site are reviewed at the Resources Committee and referred back to the Full Governing Body. Issues relating to disabilities are referred to the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral), who meets regularly with the SENCO, Head Teacher and the SEND designated governor.