



ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1. Hartmore School strives 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 treats one another with respect. Pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

1.2. The definition of disability is:

‘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’.

1.3. Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long term and substantial effect on pupils’ everyday lives.

1.4. We recognise our duty under the Disability Discrimination Act (95) as amended by the SENDA (2001):

“From September 2002, it will be unlawful for schools and LEAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, education and associated services¹”

1.5. Hartmore School will:

- Not treat disabled pupils less favourably
- Take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at substantial disadvantage (the ‘reasonable adjustment’ duty)
- Recognise we have the duty to publish Accessibility Strategies and Plans

2. Scope of the Accessibility Plan

2.1. Preparation for entry to the school, the curriculum, teaching and learning, classroom organisation, timetabling, grouping of pupils, homework, access to school facilities, activities to supplement the curriculum, school sports, school policies, breaks and lunchtimes, interaction with peers, assessment and exam arrangements, school discipline, school trips, the school arrangements for working with other agencies, preparation of pupils for the next phase of education.

2.2. The plan covers all three main strands of the planning duty:

- Improving the physical environment of school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services

2.2.1. This strand of the planning confirms our commitment to, should we have a disabled child or adult, getting aids to improve the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. The physical environment includes things such as steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs and furniture. Aids to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops and way-finding systems.

2.3. Physical aids to access education cover things such as ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept keyboards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills, such as robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils.

2.4. In school the provision of a special piece of equipment or extra assistance will be made through LEA funding and through the planning duty that applies to all schools. The distinction between auxiliary aids and services provided through the SEN route and those provided under the planning duty is that the SEN duties relate to the individual, whereas the planning duty relates to the provision of aids or services in terms of the population (and future population) of the school. For example, a pupil with visual impairment might have low vision aids provided through the statement of SEN but our school might as a general measure provide blinds and adjustable lighting through the planning duty.

2.5. Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in schools' curriculum.

2.5.1. This strand of the planning duty will help to improve access to a full, broad and balanced curriculum. It covers a range of elements including ensuring that teaching and learning is accessible through the school and classroom organisation and support, especially deployment of staff, timetabling, curriculum options and staff information and training.

2.6. Our school will plan to progressively improve access to the curriculum for all disabled pupils although many adjustments to access will be dependent on individual needs and may be provided through the SEN framework. The accessibility strategies and plans will help to ensure that we are planning and preparing to respond to the particular needs of individual pupils.

3. Improving the Delivery of Information to Pupils with Disabilities

This part of the duty covers planning to ensure information normally provided by our school in writing to its pupils (such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events) are also available to disabled pupils in a format to meet their needs.

This will include alternative formats such as Braille, audiotape and large print and also the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or sign language, through a recognised symbol system or ICT. This information will also be made available within a reasonable time frame and take account of the pupils' disabilities and pupils', parents' and carers preferred formats.

4. Other Related School Policies

4.1. Equality for disabled pupils is included as an explicit aim in all of the school's policies and is supported by the School's other policies including:

- Teaching and Learning
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Admissions policy/criteria

- School Improvement Plan
- Policy for school trips and excursions
- SEN policy
- Exclusions

5. Aims of the Accessibility Plan

5.1. Hartmore School aims to include all pupils, including those with disabilities, in the full life of the school. Our strategies to do this will include:

- Having high expectations of all pupils
- Finding ways in which all pupils can take part in the full curriculum including sport, music and drama.
- Planning out of school activities including all school trips and excursions so that pupils with disabilities can participate
- Setting admissions policy and criteria which does not discriminate against pupils with disabilities or treat them unfairly
- Devising teaching strategies which will remove barriers to learning and participation for pupils with disabilities
- Planning the physical environment of the school to cater for the needs of pupils with disabilities
- Raising awareness of disability amongst school staff (teaching and non-teaching) through a programme of training
- Providing written information for pupils with disabilities in a form which is user friendly
- Using language which does not offend in all its literature and make staff and pupils aware of the importance of language
- Examining our library and reading books to ensure that there are examples of positive images of disabled people

6. Actions to Ensure Equality for Pupils with Disabilities

6.1. Undertaking a disability audit and using the findings to inform:

- An action plan which includes targets
- The policy and targets known to all teaching and ancillary staff, pupils and carers
- The monitoring of the success of the plan
- The policy and plan will be reviewed every year as part of the rolling programme of review

6.2. The Board of Directors and Headteacher will monitor the policy and further develop good practice.

7. Monitoring

7.1. Hartmore School recognises that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged and that monitoring leads to action planning.

7.2. We will monitor:

- Admissions
- Attainment
- Attendance
- Effects of pastoral strategies
- Exclusions
- SEN Register
- Extracurricular activities
- Homework
- Selection and recruitment of staff
- Boards of Directors representation
- Carers attending consultation meetings

8. Publications for Guidance

- Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils (DfES publications)
- Schools Disability Code of Practice (Disability Rights Commission [DRC])
- SEN Code of Practice (DfES)
- DfES Guidance on Inclusive Schooling (DfES)
- National Curriculum Inclusion Statement (DfES)
- DfES: Access for disabled people to school buildings (The Stationary Office)

9. Policy Review

9.1. Last reviewed in Jan 2019. Next reviewed in July 2020.