



Accessibility Policy

Overview and Aims

Richard Cobden School is an inclusive school where we strive to ensure that the ethos and practice of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treated with respect.

We are a diverse school where all stakeholders and visitors are given the opportunity to experience, understand and value the diversity of the school community. All stakeholders and visitors are expected to demonstrate their active commitment to the school vision and ethos of equality.

We are committed to taking all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that pupils, staff and other stakeholders within, or wishing to join our school community are able to do so.

Richard Cobden School aims to include all pupils, including those with disabilities, in the full life of the school. We will do this by:

- ✿ Having high expectations of everyone
- ✿ Having an admissions policy and criteria which does not discriminate against pupils with disabilities or treat them unfairly
- ✿ Finding ways of ensuring everyone can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including sport, drama and music
- ✿ Ensuring that curriculum enrichment activities, both in and out of school, are organised so that all pupils, including those with disabilities are able to participate
- ✿ Ensuring that resources are available to meet the needs of disabled pupils or staff and that images (e.g. teaching and learning resources, books) are inclusive of positive images of disabled people
- ✿ Providing auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when it is reasonable to do so, to ensure that the pupil is not at a disadvantage in comparison to a nondisabled pupil.
- ✿ Recognising the need to make changes to our practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what we offer to the same extent as a person without a disability.
- ✿ Devising teaching strategies that support the participation of all pupils, including those with disabilities
- ✿ Raising the awareness of disability amongst all staff through training
- ✿ Ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made during building development work and planning of the physical environment of the school so as to avoid disabled people being placed at a disadvantage
- ✿ Ensuring that any pupil or other stakeholder who requires modified communication is appropriately catered for

Richard Cobden School is a large three storey Victorian building. It has a separate Nursery and Adult Learning Centre. The building presents significant accessibility challenges beyond the ground floor, the Nursery and the Learning Centre. All practicable measures are taken to enable accessibility for all pupils and adults who come to our school.

The school regularly reviews accessibility and resources. The school improvement planning process takes account of aspects of school improvement required to ensure all reasonable and practicable steps are planned and achieved in order to ensure equitable provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. The improvement actions relating to equality development priorities (EDP) can be found in the School Improvement Plan and are indicated by a tick (✓) in the EDP column.

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.

Scope of Plan

This plan covers all three main strands of the planning duty:

i). Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can access and participate in the school's curriculum.

This strand of the planning duty helps 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 school and classroom organisation and support, especially deployment of staff, timetabling, curriculum options and staff information and training. Schools are expected to plan to improve progressively 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 help to ensure that schools are planning and preparing to respond to the particular needs of individual pupils.

ii) Improving the physical environment of school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which pupils with disabilities are able to take advantage of education and associated services.

This strand of the planning duty covers 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.

Physical aids to access education also 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 extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils. At Richard Cobden School the provision of a special piece of equipment or extra assistance will be made through the SEN framework and to a lesser extent through the planning duty which 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 the school might as a general measure provide blinds and adjustable lighting through the planning duty.

iii). Improving the delivery of information to pupils with disabilities

This part of the duty covers planning to make information normally provided by the school in writing to its pupils – such as hand-outs, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to disabled pupils.

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

Other Related School Policies

- Equality for pupils is included as an explicit aim in all of the school's policies including:
- Equality Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy (including Anti-Bullying)
- Admissions policy/criteria
- School improvement plan
- School Premises Management Plan
- Policy for school trips
- SEN policy
- Exclusions Policy

Effective From	March 2024
Review Date	This policy will usually be reviewed every three years or sooner where the need arises

Accessibility Plan Objectives

Accessibility of pupils with disabilities is also considered in our improvement planning process to enable the school to implement any reasonable measures it can take to increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum. The improvement actions relating to equality development priorities (EDP) can be found in the School Improvement Plan and are indicated by a tick (✓) in the EDP column.

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

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

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

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information, which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

Accessibility Plan Objectives April 2024 – March 2027			
Improving Access to the Curriculum			
Actions	Monitoring	Lead Person	Timeframe
Ensure all teachers are competent and confident in adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.	Lesson observations Work scrutiny Pupil Progress Meetings Learning walks Pupil conferencing Performance Management	EHT HOS DHT SENDCos Phase Leaders	Ongoing
Ensure Learning Support Assistants are competent and confident in implementing individualised programmes for learning for identified pupils.	Lesson observations Work scrutiny Pupil Progress Meetings Learning walks Pupil conferencing Performance Management	EHT HOS DHT SENDCos Phase Leaders Senior Learning Support Assistant	Ongoing
Effective use of resources and specialised equipment to increase access to the curriculum for all pupils.	Learning Walks Lesson Observations Pupil conference where appropriate	EHT HOS DHT SENDCos Phase Leaders	Ongoing

		Senior Learning Support Assistant	
All out of school activities and after school clubs are planned to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to enable the participation of the whole range of pupils	Club attendance Trip Risk Assessments Pupil engagement tracking	EHT HOS DHT SENDCOs Class Teachers	Ongoing
There is enhanced access to learning provided through the informed deployment of learning support assistants trained in the delivery of interventions.	Learning Walks Intervention Observations Pupil Review Meetings Pupil conference	EHT HOS DHT SENDCOs Senior Learning Support Assistant Learning Support Assistants	Ongoing
Increased training provision for Learning Support Assistants who support pupils with complex needs and/or disabilities.	Learning Walks Intervention Observations Pupil Review Meetings Pupil conference	EHT HOS DHT SENDCOs Senior Learning Support Assistant Learning Support Assistants Educational Psychology Team SALT	Ongoing
Improving the Physical Environment			
Develop specialist SEND classrooms for pupils requiring allocated time in individualised programmes of learning.	Learning Walks Individualised Intervention Observations Pupil Review Meetings Pupil conference where appropriate	EHT HOS DHT SENDCOs Senior Learning Support Assistant Premises Officers	By February 2025
Develop Sensory Room provision for pupils who require it on ground and first floor of school building.	Track use of sensory rooms Learning Walks Feedback from Learning Support Assistants Pupil conferencing where appropriate	EHT HOS DHT SENDCOs Senior Learning Support Assistant Premises Officers	By December 2025
Review and improve school signage to ensure appropriateness for pupils with visual impairment, e.g. Communicate in Print	Premises governor audit Audit with support of visual impairment team	EHT HOS DHT SENDCOs Senior Learning Support Assistant Premises Officers Visual Impairment Team	By July 2026
Improving the Delivery of Written Information			
Ensure new website includes all necessary information for families of pupils with disabilities, making	Feedback from Parents/guardians Website audit with support of SEN team	EHT HOS DHT SENDCOs	By July 2025

clear how to access information in different formats.		Senior Learning Support Assistant IT Manager SEND Governor	
Ensure reasonable adjustments are made for parents/guardians with a disability, medical condition or other access needs so that they can fully support their child's education by taking a proactive approach to identifying the access requirements of relevant new parents/guardians where possible.	Feedback from relevant parents/guardians. Engagement of target parents/guardians in school events and meetings.	EHT HOS DHT SENDCOs Senior Learning Support Assistant IT Manager SEND Governor	Ongoing