



NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Committee Assigned: FINANCE & RESOURCES

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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous discrimination law and provides a single piece of legislation covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful.

Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre is an Academy. The School's community includes all students, all members of staff, parents / carers, volunteers and all community user groups and partners. The School is committed to equality of opportunity for all current and prospective members of its community.

The School recognises its duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act has simplified and strengthened the discrimination laws which protect people from unfair treatment. It is unlawful for a school or other education provider to treat a disabled student unfavourably.

This Accessibility Plan sets out the aims of the Governing Body of Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre which has three inter-linked elements:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;
- Improving the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students, and other community users, to take better advantage of education benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students

The definition of disability is:

- Someone with a physical or mental impairment
- The impairment is such that it has a substantial and long term adverse effect on an individual's ability to perform normal day to day activities.

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 students' everyday lives.

The definition of SEND includes many, but not necessarily all, disabled children: a disabled child has special educational needs if they have a disability and needs special educational provision to be made for them in order to be able to access the education which is available locally.

The School has the disadvantage of being an old comprehensive school built on split levels and of two storeys above the ground floor – the rooms on the level three are the same height as the playing fields. In several areas of the school, there are short flights of steps both inside and outside the building that restrict access. Corridors are often narrow with congested bottlenecks. Wherever possible, the school has already made alterations to the original building to give disabled access even though this might entail movement on the outside of the building.

Support at the School is enhanced by the facilities in the Learning Suite which is accessible to all students of all abilities. The curriculum has been planned to give flexible opportunities for those children who require an alternative curriculum. Additional support has been delivered to students at all Key Stages in the Learning Suite with literacy and numeracy as well as Teaching Assistants supporting in class. Some students attend vocational courses off site and receive support when in school to access their curriculum.

It is a requirement that the School's Accessibility Plan is resourced, implemented reviewed and revised as necessary. The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed every three years in line with the DfE's guidance. An Action Plan has been developed which is incorporated in the Site Services programme of work. This Action Plan details the priorities for the School and was created following the Access Audit Report.

2. OUR VISION AND VALUES

Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre is committed to providing the best quality provision for students at the school. We want to ensure that all children have full access to an appropriate curriculum that will allow them to succeed to the best of their ability and also prepare them for life beyond school.

The School will work towards removing any potential barriers in the different areas of school life and as part of the school's wider community to equal opportunities. Referring to this Accessibility Plan the School will continue to improve access to its buildings. In the shorter term, depending on the age of the student the School will seek to make adjustments to the timetable in such a way that, with additional support, physically disabled students will be able to access the curriculum.

It is the school's intention to involve all staff in the development of the plan to ensure that all parties feel a sense of ownership of it.

3. STUDENT ADMISSIONS

Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre is the only secondary school serving a distinct area of the Forest of Dean West Gloucestershire. Its close proximity to Herefordshire means it will also be the school of parents' choice for some disabled children who do not live in the designated catchment area. The School is principally served by twelve feeder primary schools; however, students are regularly admitted from a much wider catchment.

The School's Admissions' Policy applies to all students, regardless of any disability of which the School is aware, having made reasonable adjustments to accommodate students, parents and visitors with disabilities. The School will make reasonable adjustments to cater for the needs of new students will giving equal importance to ensuring that no other student's education is impaired. It is acknowledged that the School may not be able to reasonable adjustments to provide the level of intensive support required by some students.

In determining what is reasonable the School will have regard to:

- Whether the step would overcome the substantial disadvantage
- The practicality of the adjustment
- Financial implications
- Extent to which the support which be provided under Part 4 of the Education Act 1966
- The resources of the School and availability of financial or other assistance
- The effect of the disability on the student
- Health and safety requirements
- Need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards
- The interests of other students and those who may be admitted to the School as students

Early notification is of great value, as it will enable the School to liaise with parents, existing Schools, or other relevant source to establish what reasonable adjustments may be made at the School to support any member of the School's community. Parents / carers of children with disabilities or additional needs are expected to notify the School of them at the point of registration. If these are not known at the time, the School should be notified as soon as they are recognised. Prior to any interview or visit, parents / carers will be asked to provide further and more specific details of any additional needs of their child, and to provide copies of any professional reports e.g. Educational Psychologist's report or professional reports from other agencies or an Education Health Care Plan (if applicable).

Before accepting a student onto the School Roll, the School wants to be confident that it can support the prospective student and his or her peers in achieving their potential. We are honest with parents / carers about the School; we ask parents / carers to be honest with us and to be open about any issue relating to their children. We look for children who will thrive at the School and who will contribute to the School community, regardless of any perceived or actual difficulty.

The School will obtain details of disabled children who might attend the school in the future. The SEN - Inclusion Lead is invited to SEN review meetings during Year 5 so that we are party to discussions about particular children's needs at least a year in advance. The SEN - Inclusion Lead is usually invited to meetings in neighbouring Authorities when it is known that a parent wishes to name the School as their first choice. Also, for those parents living further away and moving to the area, the SEN - Inclusion Lead organises a meeting at the earliest possible convenience to discuss levels of support for the student and to allow parents to view the SEND / Inclusion Department.

4. CONSULTATION AND DISCUSSION

The School has an Accessibility Co-ordinator who is the School's Business Manager. The Co-ordinator consults with key members of the Senior Leadership Team and others as appropriate. In addition, the Co-ordinator seeks advice and input from the School's Medical and Student Welfare Officer and those professional advisors deemed appropriate. The co-ordinator's responsibilities are:

- To review annual the School's policies, procedures and facilities to maximise accessibility to the school by those with additional needs
- To make recommendations to improve accessibility through amendments to the Accessibility Plan

Each year, as part of the induction of Year 6 students, there will be consultation with:

- Parents / carers of children with disabilities
- The children themselves
- Local community users and partners who use the school
- Local, and feeder, primary schools

As part of the Admission process, a number of staff may meet with parents / carers to discuss whether or not a prospective student will be able to access the curriculum and what reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate this. In determining this, the School may advise additional assessments for further clarification. If after consultation, the School decides that it cannot discharge its legal and moral responsibilities to educate the prospective student and / or its legal duties to the parent(s) / carer(s), the School will be unable to offer a place.

If the School, following discussions, is satisfied that with reasonable adjustments (and / or additional support provided from outside the School's resources) the prospective student can participate in the School, then, subject to availability, a place will be offered.

5. INCREASING THE EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION

The School will make any reasonable adjustments to lesson and room timetables to ensure all students can access the full curriculum.

The school currently has a number of priorities that will assist with increasing participation. These priorities include:

- Improving the teaching and learning throughout curriculum departments
- A review of schemes of work to ensure more differentiation in the classroom and the sharing of good practice
- Ensuring homework set is accessible and meaningful to all students
- Continued development of the mentoring programme to improve assessment and monitoring
- Improving accessibility to recreational activities, school trips and special events during the school day outside of formal lessons and beyond the school day

6. IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION

There is a clear school policy that all identified students will receive hand-outs, worksheets, etc. in size 14 font as a minimum requirement. Staff are encouraged to ensure this policy is adhered to and made available to students as and when necessary.

The SEN - Inclusion Lead can advise curriculum departments on appropriately differentiated work paying particular attention to the language used and simplifying it as necessary.

The Examinations Administrator will make the necessary arrangements to ensure that examination papers are enlarged to a larger format for any visually impaired students.

The School Prospectus, New Intake Pack and any other documents can be made available in other formats on request.

7. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The School's Access Audit Report provides a detailed Action Plan of prioritised adjustments that can be made over a specified period of time. This Action Plan is referred to in determining the programme of works for the Site Services Team.

Recent school developments have been:

- Improved accessibility via a ramp to the main entrance to the school
- Disabled car parking bays provided at the front of the school
- Compliant desk to the main reception area
- The majority of the corridor fire doors are held open during the school day by maglocks to aid movement through the school
- Alternations to the Disabled Toilet within the main block

8. DIET AND MEDICATION

Within the limits of our catering facilities, a number of menu options are available and it is possible to accommodate the needs of many individuals on special diets. If this is not possible, parents / carers may provide a packed lunch.

The School employs a Medical and Student Welfare Officer who can administer medication in accordance with written guidance from parents / carers in line with the School's First Aid Protocol. Information on any medical condition should be provided to the Medical and Student Welfare Officer, in writing, as soon as it is diagnosed so staff can be briefed on any emergency procedures to be followed.

Further details are available within the school's First Aid Protocol which outlines the requirement to create a Health Care Plan for any student with specific needs.

9. WELFARE

The School has a long tradition of inclusion, accepting and valuing differences. Other policies of the School support this approach as well as our counselling support and pastoral care. Disability is specified within the School's Anti-Bullying(Students) Protocol and the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Protocol.

10. STAFF TRAINING

All Teaching Staff are expected to have the skills required to teach students with additional educational needs and this is supported by a programme of Inset training on learning, medical needs and effective social support strategies.

Consideration will be given to suitable training for all Teaching Staff and Support Staff.

11. MANAGEMENT, CO-ORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Governing Body is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the Accessibility Plan and reviewing it through the appropriate Governors Sub-Committee Meetings. The Chairs of each Sub-Committee will provide relevant reports to the Full Governing Body.

12. AWARENESS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Accessibility Plan has been developed by the Accessibility Co-ordinator and approved by the Governors Finance and Resources Group.

An electronic copy is available in the School's Staff Handbook for all staff.

An electronic copy is available for all current, and prospective, parents / carers on the School's website.

This plan can be made available in different formats if required with sufficient notice.

Those with special needs have been part of the School's community for many years; this plan is a mechanism to improve inclusion and accessibility. Support mechanisms for all users of the School with disabilities and special needs will be further enhanced when necessary and physical alternations to the premises will continue.

13. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Senior Leadership Team shall review this policy every three years, immediately prior to the review by the Governors, to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.