

Last review: November 2023
Review date: November 2024
Signed By:
Approval Committee: Governing Body

GILLINGHAM SCHOOL
Hardings Lane, Gillingham
Dorset SP8 4QP

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

1. Introduction

All schools must have an Accessibility Plan. This is required by law (Equality Act 2010).

Accessibility Plans set out how, over time, a school will:

- a) increase access to the curriculum for students with a disability
- b) improve the physical environment of the school for students with a disability
- c) make written information more accessible to students with a disability by providing information in a range of different ways.

This is our school Accessibility Plan.

2. School context

Gillingham School is a rural comprehensive in North Dorset, 11-18 school with around 1750 on roll.

Our values are that:

- We are ambitious, take pride in our school and our learning is never disrupted
- We treat everyone with kindness and dignity
- We have the right to feel safe and happy

3. Vision and aims

Our aim is for everyone at Gillingham School to feel welcome, valued, confident and included in the school community. We are committed to providing an accessible curriculum and environment to make this happen. We want our students with a disability to:

- be fully included in school life
- actively take part in high quality learning
- thrive and enjoy their learning
- develop the skills to go on and lead fulfilled lives as adults

- be empowered, confident and able to function as independently as possible.

We want our students with a disability to access all elements of school life, including school clubs, activities and trips, where medically safe. We recognise that we may have to do things a little differently to make this happen.

4. Objectives

At Gillingham School, all staff and governors will be aware of the duty to support students with a disability, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Staff will work to remove disadvantage faced by students with a disability by adopting a 'can do' attitude, having a flexible approach to teaching and by incorporating modifications into the curriculum and environment.

Person-centred systems will be in place to support the inclusion of students with a disability, for example, Moving & Handling Risk Assessment and Care Plans, Individual Healthcare Plans and Transition Plans and an attachment aware and inclusive behaviour policy.

We will continue to improve the physical environment and facilities on offer to enable students with a disability to fully access the school site.

5. Other policies

Our Accessibility Plan complements and supports our:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Supporting Students at School with Medical Conditions Policy
- Equality Information and Equality Objectives.

It can also be read alongside the following school documents:

- Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Health & Safety Policy (including off-site safety)
- Behaviour Policy
- School Development Plan

6. Student data

We ask for information about any disabilities or health conditions in early communications with new parents/carers and our feeder schools, in addition to carefully observing our students' progress.

Current student data shows that at the start of the 2024 academic year, 66 students have an EHCP and 134 are on the SEND register. Nine percent of our students were regarded as disabled under the Equality Act 2010. Our students have the following areas of need:

The main needs are SEMH, cognition and learning and PD.

This year there were 35 students who were on the SEN register, or who had previously been on the register, in Year 11. Their results were as follows for formal GCSE and BTEC assessments. The overall progress 8 figure was -0.98 with 19 students achieving a grade 4 in English and 10 in maths.

SEND students who attended school for more than 90% of the time increased their progress 8 score to $+0.13$ (17 students) and for 95% plus attendance this increases to $+0.44$. (10 students).

There were 5 registered SEND students in Year 13. The school has a very inclusive policy regarding Level 3 courses, this is testament to this and the progress made during the lowers years. The VA score for SEND students Of $+0.18$ which is higher than their non-SEN peers.

All students were supported to move onto their next phase of education be that remaining at Gillingham School to complete A-levels, attending college or completing apprenticeships.

Individual data about student's participation in clubs, visits and wider school life is held within their One Page Profile. These are reviewed annually.

Students on the SEN register are actively encouraged to attend clubs and trips at their OPP meetings and Annual reviews. Any additional cost required for students to access the trip (e.g. overnight carer sleeping arrangements, travel or food) is covered by the school or CCG.

7. Audit

To help us develop our Accessibility Plan, we undertook an environmental audit of Gillingham School. Much work has already been successfully completed to increase access for disabled students. This told us that:

- Access across the site for disabled students is good with the exception of the History Block (especially H4-7) and Media Studies where the 1930's corridors are narrow
- There are adequate toilet, shower and intimate care facilities in place
- Signage has improved in recent years though we might consider tactile signage in some areas
- Stair nosing's require updating for the visually impaired in some areas
- Access ramps in the mobiles have recently been replaced though secondary exit doors are still narrow
- Lighting is now adequate throughout the school
- Acoustic tiles in place in key areas though not in all areas
- Outside steps require regular application of bright paint on edging for visually impaired
- Science block fire exits may require ramps to be fitted
- Ageing projectors, no longer sharp enough, require replacing on a rolling programme
- Wifi access is improving - for students who need to email work or are accessing learning remotely
- Access to the astro is difficult
- Wheelchair access outside of design can feel scary for disabled people using wheelchairs or scooter because of the steep inclines
- Tripping hazards resulting from expansion and contraction of clay is an ongoing issue. Much work completed this academic year to reduce tripping hazards and uneven surfaces
- Access to staging in Main School Hall impossible for wheelchair users without specialist hired staging.

8. Consultation

In developing our Accessibility Plan, we have consulted with:

- our students
- parents and carers
- our SEND support staff
- other staff at the school, including the leadership team

- our governing body
- relevant specialist services.

These consultations told us that:

- SEND QA report demonstrates improving provision in terms of adaptive practice (scaffolding, modelling, more frequent retrieval practice).
- Online digital technologies help student's access the curriculum
- Dedicated programmes like Reading Plus are highly effective and SPARCs maths
- The PE curriculum needs more adaptation for Physically impaired students

9. Current good practice

Access to the curriculum

At Gillingham School, we have improved access to the curriculum for students with a disability through the following means:

- Improved usage of technology and online software to support students with their learning and with catch-up programmes (Reading Plus, Microsoft Teams, GCSEPOD, Seneca Learning, GCSEPOD, SPARCs maths)
- Offering a Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme to ensure that all staff are knowledgeable of the impact of providing a well-planned and sequenced curriculum, as well as, promoting adaptive pedagogical practices so that all students can access a rich and challenging curriculum
- Organising classrooms/timetables/curriculum so that they promote the participation and independence of all students
- Staff INSET training regarding sensory impairments, attachment friendly and inclusive approaches to managing behaviour and supporting a culture of inclusion
- Provision of hearing aid technologies for teachers to use in classrooms so that hearing impaired students can access the lesson
- Easily accessible EHCPs and one-page profiles, which give staff details of ways to improve access, for example, sitting hearing or visually impaired students appropriately in the classroom.
- Encouraged students with disabilities to partake in school clubs, leisure and cultural activities and school visits

- Access to research informed catch-up programmes, such as, the Graduation Group and Reading Plus programme.
- Significantly improved quality assurance work to assess whether students with disabilities are able to access the curriculum and increased student voice in the process.
- Improved transition arrangements in place for Year 6 students identified as having a disability. As well as for Year 11 students moving on to their next steps
- Redeployment of Teaching Assistants to faculty areas and effective deployment methods using the EEF research informed practices.
- New School Base completed in January 2024 which, provides a specialist facility for children with special educational needs who in normal circumstances would struggle to access mainstream education. Often catering to children on the autistic spectrum.

The physical environment

At Gillingham School, we have improved the physical environment of the school to increase access for students with a disability by:

- Providing new shower, intimate care (including hoists) and toilet facilities
- Adaptively increasing disabled parking bays as the number of students requiring such access increases
- Improved lighting across the school
- Fitting blinds to reduce glare where required
- Replaced lifts and fitted ramps to improve wheelchair access
- Fitted acoustic tiles and ceiling panels across the school
- Encouraged usage of electric mobility vehicles on site
- Adapted steps for visually impaired (works ongoing)
- Installed automatic doors
- Supplied specialist seating when required
- Improved emergency fire facilities – new emergency lighting, evacuation slides and improved signage
- Reduced tripping hazards

Access to information

At Gillingham School, we make written information more accessible to students with a disability by:

- Modifying written information so that this is available in large print or on coloured paper for students with a visual impairment;
- Adhering to guidelines from specialists (such as the Hearing and Vision Support Services)
- Using adaptive approaches to teaching including simplifying the presentation of all written information, paying attention to layout and colour, for example, using dual coding techniques.
- Teachers being made aware of the fragility of short-term working memory and how easily it is to cognitively overload students.
- Using social stories and visual cues to explain school rules for students who benefit from this.
- Communicating with parents via Edulink, an online platform where parents and carers can easily update pupil information and access information like medical care plans and One Page Profiles.
- Increasingly sending out short media clips to parents and carers with important information.

10. Sources of advice and information

Our Accessibility Plan has been written following guidance from the Local Authority and taking into account the Dorset Local Authority Accessibility Strategy. It also considers educational research findings from sources such as, the Education Endowment Foundation, and has applied these in the school's context.

11. Implementation and monitoring

Our Accessibility Plan shows how we will continue to improve accessibility at Gillingham School for students with a disability (and for staff and visitors to the school) over the next 3 years. It may be used to inform other school planning documents.

We will work in partnership with the Local Authority in implementing the Accessibility Plan. Where necessary, environmental works will be guided by relevant buildings regulations.

Sufficient resources will be allocated to implement this Accessibility Plan. However, it is recognised that in some cases, the cost of implementation might make some desirable projects unfeasible.

The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed regularly and updated if needed. It will be monitored through the Governing Body, SEND quality assurance work, the Senior Leadership Team and the Site Management Team.

The school's complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

12. Accessibility Action Plan

What needs to be done?	How will this be achieved?	Who is responsible?	When will this be done?	How can we tell if this is successful?	Date complete
<p>Improve the provision and supervision of students who require individual healthcare plans.</p> <p>Improve access to medical information and make it easier for parents/carers to update that information.</p>	<p>Suzanne Culbertson and Karen Seldon in consultation with parents and healthcare professionals.</p> <p>Provision of confidential medical information to all staff.</p> <p>Use of Edulink so that parents can access and update medical information.</p>	<p>Karen Seldon</p> <p>Suzanne Culbertson</p> <p>Joshua Bache</p>	<p>Summer 2024</p>	<p>Medical list shared with staff.</p> <p>IHPs reviewed and in place - to include levels of supervision for self-administration.</p> <p>Edulink (via SIMs) used as primary method for medical records</p>	<p>Main bulk of this work now completed. However, this is ongoing work throughout each academic year.</p>
<p>To ensure that all staff are aware of students with disabilities and strategies in place to support them. Access to information by staff via SIMS and Edulink (IT System)</p>	<p>Continue to ensure one page profiles and EHCPs are easily accessible and linked in SIMs to Edulink so that parents and teachers can access them.</p> <p>Provide dedicated time for staff to access and read these key documents</p> <p>Use quality assurance to ensure the advice in these documents is being followed.</p>	<p>Karen Seldon</p> <p>Sarah Turnbull</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff and parents will be able to easily access relevant documentation.</p> <p>Quality assurance will indicate advice is being followed.</p>	<p>Now in place but ongoing each academic year</p>

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Implementation of an attachment aware and inclusive behaviour policy and one that promotes inclusion.	Through professional development around ACES, attachment and self-regulation.	Sarah Turnbull	Ongoing priority	Reduced exclusions, improved behaviour and students being increasingly able to self-regulate their behaviour.	In place but ongoing
Targeted support to help student's catch-up and to promote positive mental health following the pandemic.	Working with outside agencies. Increasing access to online digital provision. Expand Reading Plus programme, reading for all and individual/small group tuition.	Mel Marshal Sarah Turnbull Karen Seldon	Ongoing – all current Year Groups impacted by lost teaching time	Ongoing QA will demonstrate impact or otherwise	In place but ongoing
Adaptive teaching strategies and pedagogical approach to curriculum so that all students have an entitlement and access to a rich challenging curriculum.	Through professional development and allocated departmental time. Sharing of educational research and best practice across the school.	Mark Lavis Karen Seldon	Focused work over 2021 -22. However, this is likely to be ongoing for the duration of this plan.	Quality assurance will demonstrate SEND and other vulnerable students are successfully accessing curriculum content.	In place and ongoing

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Ramps repair for mobile classrooms. Investigate easier access to the astro. Dropped curbs around the school.	Contractors to replace with metal ramps that will not become rotten in the future.	Dorset County Mark Best	Summer 2022	Metal ramps completed for mobiles and many curbs dropped over summer 2024	Mostly completed.

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	Work with DC to investigate ways to improve access to the astro.				
Adapt to needs of new students joining the school. For example, further adapting classrooms for students who have visual or hearing impairments.	Karen Seldon working with feeder schools, the child and their families and Dorset County to determine adaptations.	Karen Seldon Dorset County Mark Best	As required	Necessary adaptations completed.	Disabled parking facilities expanded in summer 2022 and 2023.
Access to the staging in the hall.	Either access through the Year 7 & 8 canteen with new ramp or via externally hired staging with a ramp access.	Nicholas Custard Local Authority	When funding becomes available through the LA	Access to hall stage is safely possible for children in wheelchairs	
New projectors to replace older versions. Some of the images from the older projectors can be significantly less sharp.	Ongoing budgeting and replacement plan. IT technicians carrying out replacements.	Natalie Cross Joshua Bache	Ongoing	All old projectors replaced.	Completed and ongoing
Ensure universally adequate wifi access across the site	Establish areas with intermittent or poor access. Fix additional routers in these areas.	Natalie Cross Joshua Bache	Summer 2022	Wifi access adequate in all areas of the school. New work started in summer 2024 to further improve access.	Completed but requires constant upgrading
Coloured demarcation lines to external steps and replacement of existing stair	Ongoing work and at least annual replacement of	Jake Burridge Mark Best	Ongoing	All nosing's replaced by 2025	

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nosing's with high visibility versions.	coloured demarcation lines to external steps.				

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Some signage around the school is red on a green background. Not appropriate for the visually impaired or for those with colour blindness. Investigate the possibility of tactile signage.	All signage to be upgraded across the school.	Mark Best Hannah Sweet	End of summer holidays 2022	All old signs replaced	Completed summer 2022

Document version control	
Document title:	Accessibility Plan Template
Date approved:	13.07.2021
Current version no.:	Version 3
Approving body:	Practice, Policy and Procedure Group
Document owner:	Education Services
Review date:	July 2024
Lead author:	Kelly Lambert