



## **Accessibility Policy and Plan**

**Oct 2021-2024**

**School name:** Netherwood Academy

**3-year period covered by the policy:** Oct 2021 – Oct 2024

**Review date:** Oct 2022

### **Introduction**

It is our intention to remove, as far as we can, those barriers which make it hard for children and adults with a disability to take part in the day to day life of our academy and benefit from the educational experiences and services we provide. We aim to ensure that our academy is a welcoming place that understands and responds effectively to children and adults with disabilities and we recognise the importance of a review and planning procedure associated with continuous development and improvement.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a *'physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*

This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools (including academies), early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- They must not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person's disability
- They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers
- This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage
- Schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making **reasonable adjustments** and making changes to practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what the school's offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can i.e. to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities.
- Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people. Public bodies also have specific duties under the public sector equality duty and must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and must prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty. Objectives must be specific and measurable (See Equality Objectives on website)

The duties cover discrimination in the provision of services and the provision of education, including admissions and exclusions. All providers must make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices and by the provision of auxiliary aids and services.

School governing bodies (Trust Management Board) and proprietors must also publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and their accessibility plans.

### **The Responsible Body**

The responsible body, Netherwood Academy in liaison with Astrea Academy trust will prepare an accessibility plan and then review and enhance the plan at such times as may be prescribed.

***The Statutory Policies for Schools (Sept 2014)*** states that it is a requirement that academies must review their accessibility plan every three years. It also states that approval should be by the governing body however, they are free to delegate the approval right to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the head teacher.

The accessibility plan will:

- outline how the academy aims to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;
- outline how the academy aims to improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the academy; improving the delivery to disabled pupils—
  - (i) within a reasonable time,
  - (ii) in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents;
- state the period to which the plan relates as well as how Netherwood Academy will keep the accessibility plan under review and, if necessary, revise it.

The duty to produce an accessibility plan has been in place since September 2002. It is the duty of Netherwood Academy to implement its accessibility plan.

**Other relevant legislation, regulations & guidance;**

Children & Families Act (2014)

The Special Educational Needs & Disability Regulations (2014)

The SEND Code of Practice (revised April 2015)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012)

Disability Discrimination Order (2006)

The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice: Protecting the vulnerable (2005)

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 & 3

DfES *"Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils"* Health Standards (England) Regulations 2003

## **Context**

We are an academy, part of the Astrea Academy trust, for pupils who age from 11 years to 16 years. The school comprises of one main building covering a relatively large/ site, over a variety of floors (to a maximum of 3) however the building has lift access to all floors.

## **Aims of the Academy**

Students who attend Netherwood Academy can be assured that they will receive the very highest quality of teaching; high levels of support and encouragement in a school with fantastic resources and facilities; a fair and equitable set of rules and guidelines to follow; and a school environment where they can feel safe, valued and where they can play a part in the school's success.

All of our staff are committed to ensuring the well-being of our students and will give their all to create an engaging, aspirational and rewarding learning environment. We work hard to ensure that our curriculum is ambitious, broad, relevant and diverse enough to cater to individual interests, learning styles and all abilities.

The experiences that students encounter at Netherwood will help them to prepare for adult life and ensure they have the right skills and knowledge to make an effective contribution to society and pursue their professional and personal ambitions.

The school is committed to delivering the highest standards of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision. Inclusion is at the heart of our ethos and we work hard to identify all students who need extra or bespoke support and adaptations to assist them in learning and accessing the curriculum.

We have excellent facilities to support this, backed up by access to a range of internal and external expertise and resources.

## **Formulating our Accessibility Plan**

The priorities for the Accessibility Plan were informed through conversations with staff, including members of the Senior Leadership Team.

## **Process**

Our accessibility plan has been developed as follows:

- 1) Review of the previous plan has been undertaken
- 2) Access audit and review of current activities completed
- 3) Actions to eliminate barriers identified (with short-term, medium term and long term targets)
- 4) Goals and targets set which can be measured & include time frames
- 5) Plan shared with Chair of Transition Management Board
- 6) Publication of the plan
- 7) Implemented the plan and allocated adequate resources
- 8) Evaluated the plan every 3 years (with the accessibility plan under on-going review and revision as necessary)

In addition to this we will:

- continually review the environment of the school, in the way that we plan, prepare and deliver the curriculum and the information we provide for pupils so that we can improve the access for both individuals and groups;
- work to provide an atmosphere where all pupils feel safe and valued;
- promote understanding of disability and work to show positive models of people with a disability. We will avoid stereotypes and use language which emphasises the person rather than the disability;
- we will encourage all stakeholders to feel comfortable in suggesting ways to improve the systems that we operate;
- examine those parts of our active and extra-curricular activities which may have limited access for pupils with a disability and see if it is possible to provide learning experiences which promote similar development of knowledge and understanding;
- we will work with professional external providers that have specialist knowledge in this area and we will consider any areas that they identify that we may need to review.

### **Access to the plan**

The Accessibility Plan will be made available via the Academy website and should paper copies be required these will be provided on request. The Accessibility Plan can be made available in a range of other formats on request.

### **Other School Policies & Documentation**

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with other Academy policies.

Attached are the audits and action plans relating to the key aspects of accessibility.

## **AUDITS & ACTION PLANS Access Audit**

**Date: October 2021**

**Lead members of staff undertaking audit: Kirsty Hubbert**

**Presented to Chair of Transition Management Board: Oct 2021**

**Section 1** The school can deliver the curriculum to all pupils. Give details of items developed, current practise and things to be developed.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Plan Prompt</b>
Teachers and assistants have trained to teach and support disabled pupils. Staff are confident about meeting the needs of pupils with a disability.		√		Ongoing and as required	Further CPD needs to be assigned for aspects of supporting specific SEND, and differentiation/ scaffolding – especially as new staff of pupils with additional needs join the school
All school staff and the governors have had access to training on disability equality and inclusion.	√			Ongoing and as required	As above; Educare module on Equality and Diversity is accessible to all
We take advice to ensure our classrooms are optimally organised and resourced for disabled pupils.		√		As required	As required dependent on student need. However, needs to be constantly under review as new pupils with specific support needs join the school.
Positive images of people with different abilities are apparent in the classrooms and the school generally.		√		Ongoing	SENCO to source materials and speakers to raise awareness of different disabilities.

Staff plan alternative ways of providing experience and understanding of parts of the curriculum. All pupils are encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities. Alternative forms of exercise are given in PE/games for disabled pupils	✓			Ongoing	All pupils in school able to access all educational visits and take part in a range of activities.
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Lessons are responsive to diversity. Lessons allow pupils to work individually, with a partner, in groups and whole class. There is extensive peer support and collaborative learning in support of those with a learning disability.	✓			Ongoing	SENCO to continuously liaise with VI/HI from BESST and other outside agencies to acquire and disseminate strategies to staff to aid appropriate differentiation to ensure inclusion.
When planning the deployment of additional adults, there is a consideration of pupils with disabilities so that if needed, they benefit from high staffing ratios and smaller group activities in order to ensure their inclusion and raise attainment.		✓		Ongoing and as required	SENCO to continuously monitor and update provision map to ensure support is appropriate and meaningful. Staff deployments to be reviewed in response to emerging needs (over time) to ensure curriculum access.
Staff recognise and allow for the mental effort/additional time required by some disabled pupils, e.g. using lip reading, processing time for pupils on the ASD Spectrum.		✓		Ongoing and as required	SENCO/SLT to ensure Student Support Plans are in place for SEND students and all staff aware of pupils needs and utilising recommended strategies through ongoing quality assurance activities. Access Arrangements to be in line with JCQ recommendations and best practice.
When renewing computer hardware and software, machines and materials are chosen to support pupils with a disability, e.g. vocalising braille, touch screen, assistive technology.	✓			As required	Netherwood Academy endeavours to update all hardware/software where available to meet the needs of students. Investigate how assistive technology will benefit SEND students at the

					Academy, including reading software/equipment to support access arrangements.
Provision of laptops is considered to aid recording and communication.	✓			As required	Ipads available in all curriculum areas and Laptops on request via the SENCO and Curriculum Leaders. During lockdown, pupils access to remote learning platforms was supported.
School visits are subject to a regular review to ensure increased levels of access or alternative experience.	✓			Ongoing	All pupils in school are able to access all educational visits and take part in a range of activities. Reasonable adjustments will be applied to allow all students to access trips
The school links with other schools to share good practice.	✓			Ongoing	Links have developed across the academy chain, Post-16 providers and feeder schools where best practise can be celebrated and shared; this will continue accordingly.
Staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation. When curriculum units are developed the originators always ask if there could be a disability dimension.	✓			Ongoing and as required	The SENCO/SLT/Subject leads to ensure staff are aware of adaptations and strategies to support disabled students to access an ambitious curriculum.
Access Arrangements are used when appropriate to support pupils with accessing assessments.		✓		As required	Access Arrangements to be in line with JCQ recommendations and best practice. Investigate how assistive technology will benefit SEND students at the Academy, including reading software/equipment to support access arrangements.



The school signpost children, young people and families to further support e.g. SENDIAS, LA support services, NHS support services	✓			Ongoing and as required	The SENCO, SLT and pastoral staff regularly meet to discuss students/families identified as needing additional support from outside agencies and liaise with accordingly.
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**Section 2:** The school is designed to meet the needs of all pupils.

Statement	Fully	Partly	Not	Time Scale	Plan Prompt
The size and layout of areas allow access for all pupils, including wheelchair users.	✓			As required	The building is designed for wheelchair access
In considering the school budget there is a clear plan to improve access and resources for those with a disability.	✓			As required	The school will review all access needs for every student on roll. Where additional equipment or provision is needed, this will be considered at SLT level. Any additional access arrangement costs attributed to this area will be identified and communicated to the Trust and any other relevant parties.
There is a plan which shows priorities for major and minor works, costed and included in the School Improvement Plan.	✓			As required	The Facilities Manager works with a wide range of stakeholders who can assist in this area. Where there is a need for changes to the physical environment, this work will be considered with these groups to ensure that it can be incorporated into the life cycle process.
The school has procedures to ensure the rigorous maintenance of specialist equipment and facilities.	✓			Ongoing	There are plans to ensure that all equipment is maintained and in good/safe working order.

Emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform all pupils including pupils with SEN, including alarms with both visual and auditory components.	✓			As required	The Alarms in Netherwood Academy are visual and auditory and fire drills are carried out frequently to assess efficiency of evacuation.
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Personal Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in place to provide people with any form of disability, who cannot be adequately protected by the standard fire safety provisions within a premises, with a similar level of safety from the effects of fire as all other occupants.			✓	Ongoing	The SENCO and Facilities Manager to meet and plan evacuation chair training and write relevant PEEPs for identified students with disabilities.
With regards to ' <i>Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014)</i> ', there a policy in place for the effective and safe administration of medication.	✓			Ongoing and as required	Netherwood Academy has a Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy.
Personal hygiene and medical issues are dealt with full attention to the safety and dignity of all concerned i.e. pupils taking medication, those with limited toileting training.	✓			Ongoing and as required	Where there is a cause for concern regarding a student's personal hygiene and/or medical issues, a member of the trained first aid team, inclusion or pastoral team can support
Pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements are safe. Disabled parking spots are available.	✓			As required	Netherwood Academy provides on-site parking for disabled drivers, visitors and staff with easy access to the building. The building incorporates lifts to each floor and corridors can facilitate wheel chair access.

There is a positive attitude to the recruitment and employment of staff with a disability and a good knowledge about the levels of support they are entitled to.	✓			As required	The Academy's policy on the recruitment of teaching and support staff is designed to ensure equality of opportunity. Staff are able to access an Educare training module on Equality and Diversity
Furniture and equipment is selected, adjusted and located appropriately. Steps are taken to reduce the background noise for HI pupils and advice sought from other agencies to take appropriate measures in the classroom.	✓			Ongoing as required	The classrooms at Netherwood Academy have 'good acoustics' as identified by the BESST HI team and a number of classrooms incorporate the looping system. There are also adjustable tables and chairs to aid students with physical disabilities.
The décor and signage is not confusing or disorientating for pupils with a visual impairment, autism or epilepsy. Colour schemes provide colour & tonal contrast for VI pupils. Labels and signs are presented pictorially and in written word if needed for people with a disability.		✓		Ongoing	Essential information is displayed around the school. SENCO to support SLT and Curriculum Leaders to create more dyslexia friendly displays.

**Section 3:** The school delivers materials in other formats.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Plan Prompt</b>
Information is provided in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with forms of printed information upon request.	✓			Ongoing as required	All doors incorporate number and braille format. VI students have access to RNIB enlarged books. All class teachers provide suitably enlarged clear print for pupils with a visual impairment. The school liaises with VI/HI specialists from BESST with regards to meeting the needs of specific pupils with a visual and/or hearing impairment (and disseminates to staff).
Information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly or people with disabilities e.g. reading aloud, overhead projections and describing diagrams.	✓			Ongoing as required	There are interactive whiteboards in all classrooms and the auditorium. Additionally, staff use projectors where appropriate. Reading Pens and magnifiers are available on request from the SENCO
ICT facilities are used to produce written information in different formats as appropriate.	✓			Ongoing as required	Staff use ICT where appropriate to support students with disabilities. Word processors are available for students with dyspraxia or have difficulties with fine motor skills.
Staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities.		✓		Ongoing	SENCO to further investigate assistive technology programmes and arrange appropriate staff training as required (especially when new staff or pupils with complex needs join the school)

External agencies have raised staff awareness i.e. VI, HI, autism, SEMH, occupational and physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, school nurses, Health visitors		✓		Ongoing and as appropriate	Training from Educational Psychologists, Astrea and the BESST team to raise staff awareness and provide effective strategies for supporting pupils SEND to access the curriculum.
There is an effective process to deal with both complaints and positive suggestions from the parents of pupils with a disability.	✓			Ongoing	Policy available on school website. Policy referred to in SEN Information Report.

### Access Plan for Period 2021-2024

The main priorities in our access plan focus on:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- improving the physical 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 that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

Netherwood Academy will monitor the implementation of the plan and keep under review the access needs of the students attending the academy.

	Focus/Objective	Action	Staff	Time scale	Cost	Outcome/Review Evaluation
<b>Short Term</b>	Personal Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) need to be put in place to provide people with any form of disability, who cannot be adequately protected by the standard fire safety provisions within a premises, with a similar level of safety from the effects of fire as all other occupants.	SLT to meet and plan additional evacuation chair training and write relevant PEEPs for identified students with disabilities	SENCO / SLT/ Facilities Manager	<i>Dec 2021</i>	<i>Training provider costs Staff time to attend</i>	To ensure all staff that work with student diagnosed with physical disabilities are trained to use the evacuation chair in order to safely remove student from the building in case of emergency.
<b>Medium Term</b>	Arrange ongoing training for staff / additional adults to raise staff awareness of how to support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum (including support from external specialists as well as a focus on the use of technology to support access arrangements)	SENCO/SLT to liaise with Astrea, external agencies and professionals	SENCO /SLT	<i>Ongoing – By end 2021-22</i>		Raised staff confidence in strategies for differentiation and increased pupil participation
<b>Long Term</b>	To raise the profile of SEND with positive images of people with different abilities in classrooms and the school generally. Raise aspirations of SEND students and support the ethos that anything is possible through hard work and determination.	SENCO to source materials and speakers to raise awareness of different disabilities		<i>Ongoing 2021-2024</i>		Promote positive role models for and resilience in students with SEND

