ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Version number	2.1	Date	September 2026
Approved by	Senior Leadership Team	Date	Spring 2025
Last reviewed on	Autumn 2026		
Next review due by	Autumn 2027		

Other relevant policies:

Equality and Diversity policy

Compliments and Complaints policy

Curriculum policy

Health and safety policy

Administering Medication policy

Risk assessment policy

Contents

1. Introduction 2
2. Vision and Values 2
3. Aims 2
4. Legislation and guidance 3
5. Monitoring arrangements 3
6. Action plan 2024-2027 4

1. Introduction

Abbey School ("the School") is an independent special school for young people aged 4 – 19 years with autism, learning difficulties and who may have behaviours that challenge.

All of our students have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Abbey School is housed in Grade II* listed buildings with consequent restrictions on physical modifications

2. Vision and Values

Vision

Our vision is that all children with exceptional needs receive a meaningful and fulfilling education that enables them to make their own choices about the direction of their adult lives.

Mission

Abbey School exists to provide the best education possible for young people with exceptional needs.

Values

- Special educational needs and/or disability should not be a barrier to a valued lifestyle
- Every pupil is a unique individual with potential
- All children and young people without exception are entitled to access the best education and support available
- Best practices in education are evidence-based,
- Teaching and learning decisions should be evidence-driven
- Clear goals make data-based decisions more numerous and effective
- Education is for everyone and for the whole of a person's life,
- Learning is enabling, empowering and extends the boundaries of autonomy
- If a pupil is not learning, it is the teaching that needs to change – the learner is always right
- The pupil voice should be heard and respected

Every decision we make is framed in the context of the Abbey School BAGS model:
B – Belonging and connection – being part of a community and having a network of valued relationships
A – Autonomy and control – having influence over day-to-day and life defining matters.
G – Gifts and talents – doing even better the things that are done really well, and learning to do things that are important but may not be done at all.
S – Speaking, listening and a sense of self – communicating effectively in a variety of ways not just speech, and having an identity that defines who I really want to be.

3. Aims

The purpose of this plan outlines how the School plans to increase access to education for our pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the Equality Act 2010.

This plan aims to:

- Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the School's curriculum
- Improve the School's physical environment to enable pupils with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided or offered by the School
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities.

Abbey School aims to be a place where everyone feels welcomed and valued. Our school aims to treat all its pupils fairly and with respect. This involves advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it without discrimination of any kind.

The School will:

- Ensure that each member of our school community is valued as an individual
- Ensure that all staff promote positive attitudes towards equality and challenge prejudice

The plan is available on the school website, and paper copies are available on request.

Our school's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, this procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

4. Legislation and guidance

This plan has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 1996
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014.

This document is also based on guidance from the Department for Education's (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 carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice defines "long-term" as a year or more and "substantial" 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 disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

5. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the School's senior leadership team.
At every review, the policy will be approved by the Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Advisory Body.
A new plan will be drawn up every three years.

6. Action plan 2024-2027

The action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

INCREASE THE EXTENT TO WHICH PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE CURRICULUM				
Current good practice	**Objectives**	**Actions**	**Deadline**	**Success criteria**
Approaches to teaching and learning are individualised, goal-based and precisely assessed. The curriculum is organised into two broad areas that support pupils to develop the academic and social skills necessary for successful lifelong learning. Personalised learning journeys are developed based on the pupil's diverse and unique needs.	During admissions assessment: identify whether pupils require specialist equipment to enable them to access the curriculum	Assessor sources specialist equipment and assesses feasibility study	Ongoing	Pupils are able to access the curriculum from their first day
	Develop learning mentors' induction and CPD in curriculum delivery training to support pupils' participation	Induction training reviewed, assessed and developed	Ongoing	Monitoring of pupil progress in class with pupils able to fully participate in curriculum
	Produce a planned timetable of enrichment activities over lunchtimes	Lunchtime Enrichment & Activity Planning (LEAP) completed by BA team Staff training and implementation of LEAP	April 2025	All pupils actively engaged / participating in a planned programme of enrichment during the lunch period
	Undertake annual curriculum audit to ensure pupils are accessing a full and varied curriculum	Phase leads to monitor breath and balance of the curriculum for all pupils within their phase through regular monitoring & evaluation cycle	July 2025 (ongoing annually)	All pupils have access to the full, broad and balanced curriculum, regardless of their needs
	Deliver training to families so the learning can effectively continue in the home setting.	TDT staff to offer training to families as identified through needs assessments and	Ongoing	Pupils able to generalise learning to the home / community settings

		parent voice as part of regular cycle of reviews (admissions, progress reviews, annual reviews)		Consistent approach to supporting pupils across home / school settings
	Train learning support staff to become Makaton tutor in order to cascade learning to education staff	Book staff member onto Makaton course Staff CPD to cascade training to school staff	July 2027	All teachers, learning mentors, BAs and SALT consistent in approach to using communication methods and aids
	Improve pupils' ability to access the community and wider learning opportunities	Obtain school vehicles Identify staff drivers ad set up insurances to enable staff to use vehicles to transport pupils	April 2025	Increased access to the community for pupils who struggle to access via other means of transport

IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE THE EXTENT PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES CAN ACCESS EDUCATION AND THE FACILITIES				
Current good practice	**Objectives**	**Actions**	**Deadline**	**Success criteria**
The environment is adapted to the needs of pupils as required within the restrictions of the listed building status. This includes: • Hand rails • Lift to the first floor (10/11AS) • Ramp access to the rear of the properties • Disabled toilets and changing facilities • Furniture and equipment selected and appropriate	Regularly assess whether the furniture and equipment are optimally organised to promote the participation of all pupils	Review and implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process in individual class bases	Ongoing	Lessons start on time without the need to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of individual pupils
	Continue to develop teaching spaces and grounds to ensure full accessibility and enrichment for all pupils' needs	Annual review of teaching spaces / grounds as part of annual school improvements	Ongoing	All pupils able to access all parts of the school site to engage with teaching & learning activities both in and out of the classroom
	Make sure that pupils have adequate equipment to support their access to the curriculum	Review and audit of resource provision inc. ICT equipment and portable aids	Termly resource audits by subject leaders / AHPs	Pupils are able to access the curriculum fully using equipment available
	Take account of the needs of pupils, staff and visitors when planning and undertaking any potential future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises	Review and audit of site and premises	Ongoing	School site and premises are fully accessible to all who use them (within the limitations of the restrictions of the listed building status)

IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION TO PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES				
Current good practice	**Objectives**	**Actions**	**Deadline**	**Success criteria**
Wide range of communication methods to ensure information is accessible: • Internal signage using total communication (picture, word and sound buttons) • Pictorial or symbolic representations to support communication of information e.g. Widgit symbols	Train learning support staff to become Makaton tutor in order to cascade learning to education staff & become Makaton certified as a school	Engage staff in communication training	Summer 2027	All teachers, learning mentors, BAs and SALT consistent in approach to using communication methods and aids
	Deliver training to families so that learning can effectively continue in the home setting.	Engage families in training	Ongoing	Pupils are supported to learn in the home setting, Parents more confident in supporting their children's needs
	Develop pupil area of school website to include information in visual and auditory formats	Develop a pupil section of the school website to support the transition process	July 2027	Pupil information available and accessible to pupils working at all curriculum access levels, regardless of their method of communication
	Launch of a whole–school council to include the voice of *all* pupils throughout the school	Launch to staff through CPD sessions Pilot whole school council and monitor & to review and embed	Dec 2024 April 2025	Whole school council launched and embedded throughout the school Every student's voice heard and included in whole school decisions as part of whole school council All pupils actively involved in decisions that affect their school experience
	Launch of the pupil voice toolkit	Launch to staff through CPD sessions Monitoring and evaluation to review and embed	Dec 2024 April 2025	Staff skilled and knowledgeable in how to obtain the voice of all pupils in their classes Increased pupil voice for all learners especially non-verbal learners