

# School Access Strategy and Plan

**(Reviewed and revised March 2024)**

Prepared with reference to:

- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
- Welsh Government Guidance: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils 2018
- Equality and Human Rights Commission: Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils 2015
- Disability Discrimination (Prescribed Periods for Accessibility, Strategies, and Plans for Schools (Wales) Regulations 2003
- Equality Act 2010, Section 88, Schedule 10
- ESTYN Supplementary Guidance: Learners with Additional Learning Needs 2022
- The Additional Learning Needs Code 2021
- The Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024
- Welsh Government Guidance Document 235/2018 “Planning to Increase Access to Schools for disabled pupils”
- Welsh Government Independent Schools Registration and Operation Guidance 165/2014
- Welsh Government Education (Wales) Measure 2009

## **Background**

The Equality Act 2010 places a legal requirement on all schools to increase accessibility for pupils with a disability. Part 6, Section 88, Schedule 10, parts 2a, b and c form the ‘three planning duties’, which we precisely document and move on to explain how we address these. This incorporates increasing the extent to which pupils can participate in the School’s curriculum, improving the physical environment of the School, and improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is already provided to non-disabled pupils.

All schools are required to produce a written School Access Strategy and Plan. This policy also applies to our Kindergarten and Afternoon and After School care. Accordingly, the School complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination (Prescribed Periods for Accessibility, Strategies, and Plans for Schools (Wales) Regulations 2003, and also with *Part 6, Section 88, Schedule 10 (Accessibility for Disabled Pupils) of the Equality Act 2010*. In particular, the School adheres to the requirements providing accessibility for disabled pupils, in the form of both an *access strategy*, and an *access plan*:

### **Accessibility Strategy**

- (2) An accessibility strategy is a strategy for, over a prescribed period—
  - (a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in our School's curriculum;
  - (b) improving 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 benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by our School;
  - (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.
- (3) The delivery in sub-paragraph (2)(c) must be—
  - (a) within a reasonable time;
  - (b) in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.
- (4) An accessibility strategy must be in writing.

### **Accessibility plan**

- 3(1) The responsible body of a school in England and Wales must prepare—
  - (a) an accessibility plan;
  - (b) further such plans at such times as may be prescribed.
- (2) An accessibility plan is a plan for, over a prescribed period—
  - (a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum,
  - (b) improving 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 benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school, and

- (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.
- (3) The delivery in sub-paragraph (2)(c) must be—
- (a) within a reasonable time;
  - (b) in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.
- (4) An accessibility plan must be in writing.
- (5) The responsible body must keep its accessibility plan under review during the period to which it relates and, if necessary, revise it.
- (6) The responsible body must implement its accessibility plan.
- (7) A relevant inspection may extend to the performance by the responsible body of its functions in relation to the preparation, publication, review, revision and implementation of its accessibility plan.
- (8) A relevant inspection is an inspection under—
- (a) Part 1 of the Education Act 2005
- 4(1) In preparing an accessibility plan, the responsible body must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementing the plan.
- (2) The proprietor of an independent educational institution (other than an Academy) must, if asked, make a copy of the school's accessibility plan available for inspection at such reasonable times as the proprietor decides.
- (4) The proprietor of an independent school in Wales (other than an Academy) must, if asked by the Welsh Ministers, give them a copy of the school's accessibility plan.”

In addressing the above Schedule 10 of the Act, the School will also endeavour to do the following:

“At least every three years, prepare, implement, review and update a written accessibility strategy which identifies how strategic actions will improve accessibility to education for disabled pupils against each of the three planning duties.

At least every three years, the School must prepare, implement, review and update a written accessibility plan which identifies how specific improvements will improve accessibility to education against the three planning duties for existing and prospective disabled pupils” (*Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils*, Welsh Government Guidance, 2018, p.4).

## **Definition of Disability**

Equality Act 2010, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 6 states:

“A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

## **Definition of ‘Additional Learning Needs’**

This is stated in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, and in relation to the School:

- (1) A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision.
- (2) A child of compulsory provider age or person over that age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she— (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or (b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained providers or mainstream institutions in the further education sector.
- (3) A child under compulsory provider age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory provider age (or would be likely to be, if no additional learning provision were made).

## **The purpose and direction of the School’s Access Strategy and Plan: vision and values**

At the School we are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils’ varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all of our children matter. The School promotes the individuality of all of our children, irrespective of ethnicity, faith, age, disability, gender, transgender, LGB status, and pregnancy and maternity.

Our school strives to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of consideration must be a reality for our children, in recognising a modern interpretation of equality and of diversity. We therefore define equality in line with the Equality Act 2010 and recognise, and afford consideration to the following protected characteristics as stated in the Equality Act 2010, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 4:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

The School also recognises and affords individual consideration to all pupils whose identity falls outside of the protected characteristics, and where their vulnerability could result in their having an additional learning need, for example in terms of their: attainment, ability, class, culture, size, appearance, and identity fluidity for example in relation to sexual orientation or transgender or faith.

In addition the School recognises other groups such as gypsies and travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, young parents and pregnant young women, pupils at risk of homophobic bullying, pupils with mental health needs, children of migrant workers, children and families in difficult circumstances, young carers, pupils who are at risk of exclusion and /or criminal activity, care experienced pupils, and pupils who are adopted, or who live with equivalent special arrangements. The School also respects and affords individual consideration to all pupils with the identities of: those who are more able and talented (MAT), and those who have English as an additional language (EAL).

## **Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEP)**

All less abled people will have a personal evacuation plan. This will be drawn up on their arrival at the School, whether they are pupils, staff or volunteers. This will be reviewed on a termly basis by the School Fire Officer (Miranda Knight) and monitored over each fire drill.

We will take all advice, guidance and support needed to ensure we meet the needs of children and adults with disabilities or those who require alternative access arrangements permanently, or else for a fixed term.

## **What we currently do**

- The School has a QTS qualified ALNCo (Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator) and has an overview of the needs of disabled pupils
- The whole School is wheelchair accessible. The site is single story accessed up single steps to all entry doors. A portable wheelchair ramp is stored off the main hall for wheelchair access as needed
- The School has a wheelchair accessible toilet
- The School grounds are accessible to wheelchair users
- The School accommodates individual children bringing their own equipment that they need to fully participate as a pupil
- The School has had a hearing impairment audit, according to the particular needs of two individual children
- The School has had a visual impairment audit, according to the particular needs of an individual child
- All children are enabled to learn and to participate fully in the curriculum; for example skeleton frame working is provided where identified as needed
- The ALNCo has undergone specialist training for ALN.
- Class and subject teachers have Steiner training relating to inclusive education, for example in training for children with ADHD, and understanding that physical movement for children is key. This is provided well throughout the curriculum, in bothmer, skipping, games, walks and movement in classroom lessons.
- The School draws on the expertise of external agencies to provide specialist advice and support

- The School has high expectations for pupils with a disability or disabilities, or any other particular identities which may mean they have an additional learning need
- There is appropriate deployment and training of class teachers and support staff
- Successful practice is shared within the School
- The School works with partner schools, and invites collaboration
- Disabled pupils have access to extra-curricular activities, as well as to the curriculum
- The School has an established ALN room, which is used for dedicated learning support for pupils
- The School has an established system of support and monitoring of progress for all pupils with ALN, through the use of an Individual Development Plan. This assists in enabling any disputes or appeals to be avoided.
- Pupils with ALN are considered in all aspects of and throughout the School community through a person-centred approach
- All learners display positive attitudes towards disability and ALN

### **What is an Accessibility Strategy and Plan?**

An Accessibility Strategy and Plan is a practical tool for implementing the School's policies to give access to pupils with disabilities and to pupils with additional learning needs.

### **Contents of the Strategy and Plan**

The strategy and plan, an outline of which is included below, covers:

- Increasing access for disabled pupils to the school's curriculum
- Improving access to the physical environment of the School
- Improving the delivery of written information to disabled pupils

<b>Outline Implementation Strategy and Plan: Area of Accessibility</b>	<b>Actions Required</b>	<b>Implement</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Status</b>
Access to Curriculum	Acquire specialist sporting equipment	As needed	Class teachers	As needed

	Acquire specialist DT equipment	As needed	Class teachers	As needed
	Acquire specialist Science equipment	As needed	Class teachers	As needed
Physical Environment	Wheelchair access	In place	Admin	In place
	Wheelchair accessible toilet	In place	Admin	In place
	Specially adapted furniture	As needed	Class teachers	As needed Standing desks currently in use
	Specialist manual handling training	As needed	Class teachers	As needed
	Facilitate easy access to stored materials	As needed	Class teachers	As needed
	Acquire specialist text books	As needed	Class teachers	As needed Large print currently in use
	Acquire specialist writing materials	As needed	Class teachers	As needed Dictaphones, IT apps, coloured gels, writing slopes currently in use

The School has also adopted the principles of the following:

- Paramount consideration is in the best interest of learners
- Opinions of affected learners, parents and carers are always taken on board
- All learners can expect to have all their needs identified and catered for
- Securing an assessment of need, and provision for those needs, is dealt with in a straightforward and coherent manner by the School

### **Accessibility plans for disabled pupils**

The School has prepared accessibility plans for: increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability or disabilities can participate in the School's curriculum; improving the physical environment of the School in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school; and improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is already provided in writing to non-disabled pupils. The School's accessibility plans are available in written documents, are within our available resources, and cover a period of three years.



By March 2027 the School will have altered the premises to a significant extent, and will have adapted the following 4 aspects:

1. The School will build a permanent, wide and easy access large ramp at the front entrance to the School, and also a second permanent ramp for easy access to the back playground.
2. The School will also eradicate its currently difficult threshold of a wrought iron door frame. This will be replaced with wide access and accessible front entrance doors. (Planning approval for this has been slowed by delays within Cardiff Council Planning Department post Covid pandemic).
3. The School will also have a new allocated 'sick bay', which will be located immediately next door to the School's wheelchair accessible disabled toilet.
4. The woodwork building will have become permanently wheelchair user-friendly, without our depending on a moveable wheelchair accessible ramp that we have currently.

In addressing these 4 aspects as well as all others, the School will secure our embedding of the principle of Universal Design for Learning, which considers and prioritises the needs of those with the greatest barriers to learning and participation, thus embracing all learners. This mainstream education principle is parallel to Rudolf Steiner's hundred-year-old principle of 'soul economy' which is remarkably similar; Steiner schools have been adopting this kind of approach throughout that period.

### **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET)**

The School recognises that the ALNET determines claims of unlawful treatment of disability. It may hear claims about admissions and exclusions (in some circumstances) and education and associated services in schools. Under this Act children and young people share the same rights as parents or carers to appeal in respect of Additional Learning Needs and the right to make a claim in respect of disability discrimination in schools. The School recognises that this is the right of pupils, and /or their carers.

The School also recognises and accepts that the ALNET is able to order remedies it considers reasonable and set deadlines when directing action by schools. If we fail to comply

within the prescribed time limits, or if we have acted or are proposing to act unreasonably in complying with an ALNET order, the Local Authority can make a direction to require compliance in our School.

Overall, the School adheres to all points of the **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET)**, and accepts the practices of **The Additional Learning Needs Code 2021**, and the direction of **Estyn's Supplementary Guidance: Learners with Additional Learning Needs 2022**.

These principles are:

A unified legislative framework that supports all children of compulsory school age or below with ALN, and young people with ALN in school or further education;

- An integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions; and
- A fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

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#### **Issue date**

This revised policy takes effect from March 2024

#### **Review date**

This policy will be reviewed and revised by the Trustees and School Business Manager at least every three years

#### **Endorsement**

Full endorsement to this policy is given by:

Name: Brigid Bowen

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Position: Chair of Trustees, Cardiff Steiner School

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Signed:



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Date: 29.03.24

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**Related policies**

This policy should be cross-referenced to related School policies/documents including:

- ALN Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy