

Willow Tree Primary School – Accessibility Plan

1. Legal Background

The Disability Discrimination Act (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) requires all schools and LEA's to plan to increase the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils. LEA's must prepare an accessibility strategy covering all maintained schools in their area, and each school must produce its own accessibility plan. From September 2002 schools and LEA's are required to start formulating accessibility strategies and plans. They must have written documentation covering an initial period of three years in place by April 2003. Both school and LEA's are required to plan for:

a) Improving access to the physical environment of schools

This includes improvements to the environment of the school, which can include visual, acoustic and physical environments. All new school buildings have to comply with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and should be physically accessible to disabled pupils. Much of the work in the area of improving the physical environment will therefore involve improving access to existing buildings.

b) Increasing access for disabled pupils to the curriculum

Access to the curriculum covers not only teaching and learning, but also the wider curriculum such as after-school activities, leisure, sporting and cultural activities or school visits. LEA's may be able to help schools by offering staff training, encouraging schools to work together and share good practice, and by offering schools a range of support services such as advice on teaching techniques, classroom management and curriculum material.

c) Improving the delivery of written information to disabled pupils

This covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its pupils available to disabled pupils. Information should take account of pupils' disabilities and parents' preferred formats and should be made available within a reasonable timescale. LEA's and schools have a duty to review their strategies and plans, revise them if necessary and to implement them. LEA's and schools should prioritise resources for implementing their strategies and plans.

Definitions

The Disability Discrimination Act describes a disability as a "physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect upon their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". Impairments include sensory impairments – such as those affecting sight or hearing, and people who have had a disability are protected from discrimination even if they no longer have a disability. Mental illnesses that are clinically well recognised are included. So, for example, medically diagnosed ADHD is considered a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act. While many disabled pupils have, or may be eligible for, statements of Special Educational Needs, not all disabled pupils have SEN. Equally, not all pupils with SEN will necessarily have a disability under this legislation.

a) At Willow Tree Primary School, we are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are further committed to challenging attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

b) Willow Tree Primary School plans, over time, to increase the accessibility of provision for all pupils, staff and visitors to the school. The following areas will form the basis of the Accessibility Plan with relevant actions to:

- Increase access to the curriculum, incorporating after-school and out of school activities and including educational visits
- Improve access to the physical environment of the school
- Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities

c) It is acknowledged that there will be the need for ongoing awareness raising and training for all staff and governors in the matter of disability discrimination and the potential need to inform attitudes on this matter.

d) This Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the Disability Non-Discrimination Policy