Mulberry
Academy Hastings

Accessibility Policy

2026/27

Approval Body	
Approval Date	*11th July 2026*
Implementation Date	*1st September 2026*
Review Date	*11th July 2027*

1. Purpose/aims

1.1. The aim of this policy is to outline how Hastings Academy ensures accessibility for all pupils, staff, parents and visitors to the school site and curriculum, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

1.2. This policy supports our commitment to providing an inclusive learning environment where all individuals are valued and supported regardless of their physical, sensory, cognitive or social needs.

1.3. The policy applies to all stakeholders of the school, including pupils, staff, governors, parents, visitors, and contractors.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

2.1. This policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

- ⇒ Equality Act 2010
- ⇒ Children and Families Act 2014
- ⇒ SEND Code of Practice 2015
- ⇒ The Education Act 1996
- ⇒ The Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE)
- ⇒ Accessibility Planning Guidance (DfE)

2.2. Under the Equality Act 2010, schools have a duty to:

- ⇒ Not discriminate against disabled pupils
- ⇒ Take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- ⇒ Publish an accessibility plan

3. Definitions

3.1. Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as a "physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

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3.2. Definitions of **SEN**, D**isability**, and the four broad areas of need (communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; sensory and/or physical) remain in line with the SEND Code of Practice and pertain to the following:

Special educational needs

⇒ A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

⇒ They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

4. Policy Statement

4.1. Mulberry Academy Hastings is committed to:

⇒ **Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the School's curriculum;**

- This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers entry into the school. Improving the physical environment to enable better access to education and associated services

⇒ **Improving the provision of written information to disabled pupils, in particular that which has already been produced for pupils who are not disabled;**

- This will include planning approaches by which the school will make written information (e.g. handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about School events) more accessible to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The delivery of such information should be in ways which are determined

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after taking into account the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents, and be within a reasonable timeframe.

⇒ **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**

- This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented effectively.

5.2. The Local Governing Body monitors compliance and reviews the Accessibility Plan annually.

5.3. The SENDCo works with relevant stakeholders to ensure access arrangements meet individual needs.

5.4. All staff have a responsibility to support accessibility and promote inclusive practices within their roles in the following ways;

⇒ Ensure that they do not treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else for a reason relating to the person's disability

⇒ Not indirectly discriminate against a pupil with a disability by failing to make a reasonable adjustment when a disabled pupil is placed, or is likely to be placed, at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled

⇒ Implement reasonable adjustments

⇒ Ensure that if a pupil discloses a disability, the member of staff should request their permission, where appropriate, to share this information with relevant colleagues

6. Reasonable Adjustments

6.1 The **'Reasonable Adjustments'** duty

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⇒ The duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' does not include a duty to change physical features. It does include a duty 'to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide auxiliary aids … where a disabled person would, but for the provision of the auxiliary aids, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled'.

6.2 The term "auxiliary aids" found in the Act cover both auxiliary aids and services but there is no legal definition for what constitutes auxiliary aids and services. Examples of what may be considered an auxiliary aid could be hearing loops, adaptive keyboards and special software. There is no generic definition of what constitutes a 'reasonable adjustment'; the key test is reasonableness, which will always be specific to the pupil and context.

6.3 For further information about reasonable adjustments, please also see the School's Learning Support and Disability Policy and the School's Equal Opportunities (Pupils) Policy.

7. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the School's curriculum

7.1 When planning, teachers will need to set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to succeed, including pupils with disabilities. They should plan their approaches to teaching and learning so that all pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively. To create effective learning environments this will include:

⇒ Valuing all contributions

⇒ Ensuring pupils feel secure and able to contribute appropriately

⇒ Ensuring that all forms of bullying will be challenged

7.2 Many pupils with disabilities learn alongside their peers with little need for additional resources beyond the aids which they use as part of their daily life (e.g. a wheelchair, a hearing aid or equipment to aid vision). However, teachers must take account of potential barriers to learning and, where necessary, ensure in their planning that they make provision to support individuals or groups of pupils to enable them to participate as fully and effectively as possible in the

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curriculum and assessment activities. This may include adapting Modifying resources and / or making them more accessible, e.g. providing soft copies / printed copies of teaching material, ensuring font sizes and reproduced materials are fully accessible, etc. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset of work. Also, during assessments, teachers should bear in mind that reasonable adjustments may need to be made to support individual pupils.

7.3 Curriculum planning and assessment for pupils with SEND must take account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the pupil. Disabled pupils may need access to specialist equipment and approaches or to alternative or adapted activities, consistent with school-based intervention augmented by advice and support from external specialists. Teachers should work closely with the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Team and, where appropriate, representatives of other agencies who may be supporting the pupil.

7.4 Teachers will need to plan for pupils' full participation in learning and in physical and practical activities through:

⇒ Using specialist aids and equipment

⇒ Providing support from adults or peers when needed

⇒ Adapting tasks or environments

⇒ Providing alternative activities, where necessary

7.5 Teachers should also take specific action to enable the effective participation of pupils with disabilities, for example by:

⇒ Planning appropriate amounts of time to allow for the satisfactory completion of tasks, for example by:

- Taking account of the reduced pace at which some pupils will be able to record work, either manually or with specialist equipment, and of the physical effort required
- Being aware of the high levels of concentration necessary for some pupils when following or interpreting text or graphics, particularly when using vision aids or tactile methods, and of the fatigue which may result

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- Allocating sufficient time, opportunity and access to equipment for pupils to gain information through experimental work and detailed observation
- Being aware of the effort required by some pupils to follow oral work, whether through use of residual hearing, lip reading or a signer, and of the tiredness or loss of concentration which may occur.

⇒ Planning opportunities, where necessary, for the development of skills in practical aspects of the curriculum, for example by:

- Providing adapted, modified or alternative activities or approaches to learning in physical education and ensuring that these have integrity and equivalence to the curriculum and enable pupils to make appropriate progress
- Providing alternative or adapted activities in science, art and design and design and technology for pupils who are unable to manipulate tools, equipment or materials or who may be allergic to certain types of materials
- Ensuring that all pupils can be included and participate safely in geography fieldwork, local studies and visits to museums, historic buildings and sites, etc.

⇒ Identifying aspects of the curriculum that may present specific difficulties for individuals.

Sports

7.6 **Physical Education**

The Physical Education Department will need to make plans to consider provision for disabled pupils. Specifically, for disabled pupils who cannot access an activity, teachers will need to provide one or all of the following:

⇒ Adapted, modified or alternative activities that have integrity and equivalence to the activities followed by other pupils and that enable the pupils to make progress

⇒ Specific support to enable the pupils to participate in certain activities or types of movement

⇒ Careful management of the pupils' physical regime to allow for specific medical conditions

7.7 **Recreational activities and School clubs and societies**

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Access to school trips may require alternative forms of transport to be considered in order to ensure accessibility for all students (e.g. if considering the use of the Underground for London-based trips). For further information about the School's curriculum, co-curricular provision and approaches to teaching, please see the School's Curriculum Policy, the School's SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.

8 Improving the provision of written information to disabled pupils, in particular that which has already been produced for pupils who are not disabled

8.1 Written information provided to pupils in School covers a wide range of areas. Most obviously there is the curriculum material provided through visual presentations (including, for example, textbooks and worksheets). This can be complemented by written information on whiteboards, flip charts or interactive technologies. Accessibility issues are considered when new equipment is acquired by the School to ensure that the current and future needs of all pupils are met as far as is reasonable.

8.2 In addition to curriculum information there is the wide variety of other information provided by the School to its pupils (e.g. the class timetable, homework diary, a letter about a class excursion, the School's weekly newspaper, etc.). Where reasonable, this information will be provided in an accessible way to pupils with disabilities, recognising that different pupils are likely to require different arrangements in different situations.

8.3 Accessibility for all learners is considered when introducing and setting up new ICT hardware (e.g. interactive whiteboards/display screens), peripherals and software.

8.4 The Mulberry Academy Hastings' Sensory Needs Service Advisory Team and Communication Learning and Autism Support Service can offer advice of support provided by external agencies for neurodivergences, support with braille, induction hearing loops or British Sign Language support.

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9 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

9.1 Although the duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' does not include a duty to change physical features, the School has a planning duty which includes physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services. The School will continue to work towards improving access for the disabled and intends to make alterations to the physical features of the School as part of its long-term planning process.

9.2 **Wheelchair users**

The external school building is accessible to all entrances via appropriate access ramps to enable access to all entrances around the front of the school site. Within the internal building, the school is accessible to the upper floors via two functional lifts. Alternative access to the upper floors and playgrounds can be gained via the Easthill side entrance, which then leads round to accessible ramps. Alternative access to the school playing field can be gained via the Westhill side entrance and external ramp.

10 Support for Specific Areas of Need

10.1 **Examples of implications of the reasonable adjustment duty for specific subjects**

It is important for teachers to make adjustments to help disabled pupils overcome difficulties presented by particular aspects of the teaching and learning programme, for instance by:

- ⇒ Using approaches to enable hearing-impaired pupils to learn about sound in science and music
- ⇒ Helping visually impaired pupils to learn about light in science, to access maps and visual resources in geography and to evaluate different products in design and technology and images in art and design
- ⇒ Providing opportunities for pupils to develop strength in depth where they cannot meet the particular requirements of a subject, such as the visual requirements in art and design and the singing requirements in music

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⇒ Adjusting or discounting these aspects in appropriate individual cases when required to make a judgement or academic attainment.

10.2 **Access Arrangements**

The School's policy and procedures with regard to Access Arrangements in Entrance Examinations and Public Examinations are outlined in the following policies:

⇒ Admissions Policy

⇒ SEND Policy and Information Report

⇒ Exams Policy

10.3 **Working with external advisors**

The SEND Team, Medical Team and / or Pastoral and Wellbeing Head of Years can be contacted by parents in relation to assessment of and ongoing work with pupils. Where appropriate, the School will make use of external advisors (e.g. medical practitioners and Educational Psychologists) and has access to a range of services through the East Sussex Local Education Authority and Medical Services.

10.4 **Health and Safety**

There is a First Aid Team and an Administration of Medication Team on site daily during normal school hours who would oversee the administration of any medicines required for a disabled pupil. The School's health and safety procedures, including the procedures for evacuation of disabled pupils in the event of an emergency (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)), are described in the relevant policies, which are reviewed and revised where appropriate to incorporate the needs of disabled pupils. For further information about provision for pupils with SEND, please see the School's SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.

11 Staff Training

11.1 It is recognised that there is a need to ensure that skills are more specifically developed to enable teachers to provide effectively for pupils with a range of disabilities. Staff training and development will take place to ensure that curriculum access is further enhanced.

11.2 Examples of training which may be sought by and provided to teachers include:

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- ⇒ Ensuring access to text and supporting delivery of information in the three main areas of impairment (physical, hearing and visual), including through the use of different media
- ⇒ Differentiation and / or scaffolding
- ⇒ Developing ICT-based resources / templates which can provide a basis for effective information delivery (in both the curriculum and organisational/administrative aspects). Training will be provided on new ICT equipment to allow teachers to use special features to make teaching / resources more accessible to pupils with SEND.
- ⇒ Specialised areas (e.g. Brailing and BSL to ensure that effective communication can take place)

12 Procedures

12.1 The school will:

- ⇒ Maintain an up-to-date Accessibility Plan, reviewed annually
- ⇒ Audit physical accessibility annually and act on findings
- ⇒ Plan reasonable adjustments for pupils with temporary or permanent impairments
- ⇒ Provide staff training to support inclusive practice
- ⇒ Ensure communication formats are accessible (e.g. large print, translations)
- ⇒ Consult regularly with disabled pupils, parents, and staff

13 Monitoring arrangements

13.1 This policy and the accompanying Accessibility Plan will be monitored by the Local Governing Body and reviewed annually.

13.2 Compliance will be assessed via:

- ⇒ Site audits
- ⇒ Curriculum reviews
- ⇒ Stakeholder feedback

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⇒ Analysis of accessibility-related incidents or complaints

14 Links with other policies

14.1 This policy is closely linked to the Mulberry Academy Hastings' SEND Policy and SEND Information Report and should be read in conjunction with these policies.

14.2 This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

⇒ Equal Opportunities Policy

⇒ Curriculum Policy

⇒ Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

⇒ SEND Policy

⇒ SEND Information Report

⇒ Health and Safety Policy

Version Control

Version	Reviewed	Changes Since Last Version
No. 1	11/07/2026	New Policy

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Trust and Academy Accessibility Plan Template

Improving Physical Access

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Access: To be aware of the access needs of all students/children, staff, governors and parents/carers. Ensure all staff, local board members and other volunteers / visitors to the academy are aware of access issues	• Gather data around access needs at the point when a child begins at the academy • Create access plans for individuals as required • Annual reminder to parents, carers through communication to let us know if they have problems with access to areas of the academy. • Include the accessibility plan as part of induction	Annually or as required September (annually) As required		Individual, relevant and current information is gathered and shared as required so that all needs are met.
Ensure everyone has access	Ensure that nothing is preventing access for all	Daily check to ensure the entrance area is clear of obstructions		All visitors feel welcome.
Maintain safe access for all	Check exterior lighting is working on a regular basis	Ongoing checks – 3 monthly		Everyone feels safe and can gain access safely into the academy grounds
Exits: Ensure all disabled or impaired people can be safely evacuated	Ensure there is a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) for all disabled staff and pupils.	As required		All students and staff working with them are safe
Ensure that the academy passes its Fire Safety Audit including training for staff up to date, equipment checks are regular and defect equipment is replaced.	Ensure staff are fully trained and aware of their duties.	Daily		All personnel and students have safe independent exits from academy

Ensure that the building remains fully accessible and compliant in line with the Equality Act	Ensure that any building or maintenance works ensure full compliance with the Equality Act in relation to access e.g. ramps, visual alarms etc	As works are undertaken		That the building is fully accessible and easily travelled by all staff, students, parents/carers, visitors

Improve access to Information

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Website is compliant with statutory regulations	Annual website audit undertaken	Annual Check		Compliant Website
To improve awareness of alternative formats for sharing information	Using a variety of formats for communication, including text, email, student-post. Ensure all parents/carers are aware that the academy can provide communication in large text, via telephone/meetings to meet needs. Check that correspondence sent home is accessible in relation to reading ability language etc.	Ongoing Ongoing		All parents/carers become aware of alternatives available and how these can be accessed
Ensure information in all SEN reviews is accessible to all parties	Provide a choice of formats for student's parents/carers to provide views on reviews	Ongoing		Parents/carers have choices about how they are communicated with and how they provide their points of view.

Improve access to the Curriculum

Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Curriculum adjustments ensure fair access for all.	Consider the needs of all students in the academy	As required in response to student need	All staff	All students access fully the curriculum provided.

	when planning lessons adjust resources accordingly such as text size, paper colour, writing equipment, classroom position etc. - With consideration for those children with general and specific learning difficulties Ensure all staff have access to the inclusion data of students for who they teach to ensure they can plan and deliver to meet their needs			Structured conversations as appropriate with parents/carers.
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with speech impairment	Promotion of an ethos of inclusion, acceptance and understanding. Demonstration of patience and support. Specific programme as required through liaison with Speech Therapy Service.	As required in response to student need		Progress confirmed by observations and formal assessment
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with hearing impairment	Quiet classrooms, child facing the teacher, clear enunciation, use of hearing loops. TA support as required	As required in response to student need		Progress confirmed by observations and formal assessment
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with visual impairment	Child faces board, glasses worn. Modified print.	As required in response to student need		Progress confirmed by observations and formal assessment
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with impaired	Support in P.E. Classroom environment, corridors unobstructed pathways and clear of hazards. Doorways wide	TA support as required		Children are able to access all activities

mobility including wheelchair users.	for wheelchair use, ramps as required. Walking rule in academy. Supervised access to lifts. Early exit from classes. Direct access to server at lunch time, Regular visits from Physio			
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with emotional and behavioural difficulties	Layout of classroom, time out, clear targets, clear behavioural expectations.	TA as required		Progress confirmed by teacher assessment and achieving targets
Ensure teaching and learning methods and environment support children with diagnosed medical conditions e.g. asthma, allergies	Accessibility of medication. Awareness of staff when planning DT, PE, Science activities	Awareness for the subject specific lessons and PE		Children are able to access the activities
Necessary provision is in place to allow all students to access extra-curricular opportunities	Pre-preparation meetings with parents and carers to make all necessary additional arrangements such as transport, knowledge of the local area etc.	As required in response to student need		All students access fully the curriculum provided
To improve literacy and numeracy levels of students achieving below age expectations	Identify students who require additional support through RAGs. Provide appropriate interventions	Weekly		Enhanced student progress shown
Ensure all students can access public examinations and statutory assessments	Access arrangements in place for all students who require and are eligible for support, including, readers, separate rooming etc.	For all exam/ assessment series		All students can fully access all exams and statutory assessments