



# **Accessibility Strategy**

**Updated May 2024  
Access to Education & Inclusion Service**

## Legislation

Under the *Equality Act 2010*, a person has a disability ‘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.’ Disability includes physical and sensory impairments, mental health needs and learning disabilities.

The *Equality Act 2010* acknowledges that a disabled person may need to be treated differently, to avoid considerable disadvantage. Taking reasonable steps to avoid this disadvantage is anticipatory, often known as the ‘reasonable adjustments duty’. Both local authorities and schools must adhere to this duty. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment is a form of discrimination.

The reasonable adjustments duty includes the following key elements: adjusting any provision, criterion or practice; plans to make buildings more physically accessible; and provision of auxiliary aids/equipment.

All local authorities have a legal duty to have an accessibility strategy for maintained schools, i.e. schools they retain responsibility for. This is a statutory requirement included in the *Equality Act 2010 (under paragraph 1 Schedule 1)*. Whilst often related to children and young people who have special educational needs, the duty explicitly relates to those who have a disability.

The need for an accessibility strategy does not apply to academies or free schools. However, whilst the accessibility strategy requirement only relates to maintained schools, many of the supporting arrangements made by the Local Authority will also benefit disabled children and young people attending academies and free schools within the local area.

In addition to local authority responsibilities, all schools, including academies and free schools, must have an accessibility plan in place and this should be based on the same principles as a local authority accessibility strategy. As a rule, it is the responsible body for the school that has responsibility for the duties in the Equality Act. All schools: *“... must prepare and publish a SEN information report and their arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to enable access to the school for disabled children and their accessibility plan showing how they plan to improve access progressively over time.”*

*SEND Code of Practice 2015*

In addition:

- ‘appropriate authorities’, including all schools, must have regard to the statutory guidance set out in *Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions* when carrying out their statutory duty to make arrangements to support pupils at school with medical conditions, including personal care
- schools are required to publish information in compliance with the *Public Sector Equality Duty* and set equality objectives

## Introduction

The Local Authority will:

- work with the schools for which it is responsible to ensure they do not disadvantage or discriminate against a disabled child or young person
- offer advice to other schools, such as academies and free schools, on meeting their legal duties
- work closely with schools and their governors to agree reasonable adjustments that will allow disabled children and young people full access to school facilities and activities
- work together with all settings and other services, such as those in Health, to identify and plan for the needs of disabled children and young people more generally

All maintained schools have been supported to prepare for basic accessibility needs. School governing bodies, in liaison with the Local Authority, have been delegated the responsibility of ensuring school sites are accessible as specified in Schedule 10 of the *Equality Act 2010*.

Where possible, children and young people with physical and sensory difficulties are educated at their local mainstream school, with maintained schools adapted as necessary to support their inclusion.

Alongside SEND Information Report reviews, Accessibility Plan audits are conducted by the Local Authority on a yearly basis for all mainstream schools in the local area, to ensure adherence to statutory requirements. Additionally, reviews of a range of specific accessibility features are undertaken for each school.

The local area has several specialist provisions for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This includes special schools and a range of additionally resourced provisions catering for a variety of needs.

Most children with an EHCP can access school or college in a safe manner and do not need any form of travel assistance from the Local Authority. There are some children and young people, however, for whom some form of travel assistance is necessary. This is available to pupils who are assessed as eligible under the relevant policy and these policies have been developed to take account of the relevant Department for Education guidance.

The Local Authority's accessibility strategy explains how the Local Authority and schools will:

- increase access to the curriculum for disabled children and young people
- improve the physical environment of schools to increase access for disabled children and young people
- make written information more accessible to disabled children and young people by providing it in a range of different ways

## Increasing access to the curriculum

The Local Authority will:

- support school leaders, including SENCOs, in relation to policies, strategies and systems available through the Local Authority
- provide a Local Offer of services and provision that is available to children and young people with SEND and their families
- offer continuing professional development opportunities to schools to support and enhance the understanding of accessibility in the curriculum
- provide advisory and outreach services to enable mainstream schools to access support and advice so they can better support children with disabilities
- maintain a policy and associated guidance for all schools about supporting children and young people with medical conditions
- provide opportunities for SENCOs to regularly meet, share good practice and keep up to date with new developments
- ensure that EHCPs are specific about the provision required to make the school curriculum more accessible for individual children and young people with a disability
- encourage liaison between early years settings and primary, secondary schools and colleges to ensure good transition
- encourage high aspirations for the most vulnerable learners

Schools will:

- have regard to national and local guidance on meeting the duties set out in the *Equality Act 2010* and the *Children and Families Act 2014* about SEND
- include improvements that increase access to the curriculum in their accessibility plan and ensure this is published on their school website
- teach and support children and young people with SEND through an inclusive curriculum, adaptive high quality teaching strategies and a range of appropriate interventions
- establish effective ways of assessing and monitoring the progress of vulnerable groups
- make sure there is effective support for transition for children and young people with SEND
- apply funding appropriately to make sure vulnerable groups are not disadvantaged in comparison to nonvulnerable groups
- provide effective professional development for staff and governors
- involve parents and carers in decision making and keep them informed of their child's progress

## Increasing access to the physical environment

The Local Authority will:

- facilitate the access of individual children and young people with physical or sensory impairments, or complex medical conditions, where required
- ensure that all key services within the Local Authority are joined up to assist with issues regarding individual placements
- undertake/commission audits to advise on the required adaptations and additional resources needed to accommodate children and young people with physical or sensory impairments or complex medical conditions, in compliance with accessibility legislation and requirements
- consider joint funding for capital projects to ensure that buildings comply with accessibility requirements, including the planning of new buildings, extensions and adaptations
- make sure EHCPs are specific about the adaptations required to make the school environment more accessible for individual children and young people with a disability

Schools will:

- keep the physical accessibility of the school building and site under review and make timely arrangements to accommodate access
- include improvements that increase access to the physical environment in an accessibility plan that is published on the school website
- comply with the anticipatory duties as set by the *Equality Act 2010*
- respond to the expectations set out in local and national guidance on meeting the *Equality Act 2010* and *Children and Families Act 2014* about SEND
- fund projects that increase access to the physical environment from their own resources and, where appropriate, to liaise with the Local Authority the about these projects
- undertake any improvement projects in liaison with their property surveyors and adhere to building regulations and health and safety requirements
- apply advice provided through environmental audits conducted by relevant services and professionals across Health and Education
- make sure curriculum needs are met by providing access to appropriate classroom facilities
- carry out risk assessments for school trips, before and after school clubs and extracurricular activities to make sure these provisions are accessible for children and young people with mobility, sensory or medical difficulties
- provide effective professional development for staff and governors
- involve parents and carers in decision making and keep them informed of their child's progress

## Increasing access to information

The Local Authority will:

- offer guidance and training that covers the requirements of an accessibility plan and the specific need to increase access to information
- provide information to children and young people and their families in accessible formats whenever needed
- provide advice to schools from advisory, specialist teaching and outreach services about how best to support children and young people with accessing information
- make sure EHCPs are specific about the provision required to make information to all children and young people more accessible for children and young people with a disability
- make sure any new buildings or extensions to Local Authority buildings are appropriately signed in line with accessibility and health and safety requirements

Schools will:

- include improvements that increase access to information for disabled children and young people in their accessibility plan that is published on the school website
- ensure a proactive approach to researching and using a range of communication techniques and technologies, seeking the advice of relevant professionals where necessary
- monitor and review the skills and expertise of staff to support children and young people with disabilities.
- involve children, young people and their families in decision making processes regarding the accessibility of information
- link to the Local Authority's Local Offer website from their school's website

## Links to further information, guidance and tools

### Accessibility Plan guidance and templates for Bromley schools

<https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Page/15851>

### Accessibility for disabled people in Bromley primary and secondary schools

<https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Page/15851>

### SEND Information Report guidance and templates for Bromley schools

<https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Page/15872>

### Reasonable adjustments guidance for Bromley schools

<https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Page/15867>

### Bromley's Ordinarily Available Provision and SEND Graduated Approach

<https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Page/15652>

### Health and medical needs guidance for Bromley schools

<https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Page/15859>

### Bromley Local Offer

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/localoffer>

### Bromley Education Matters – SEND & Inclusion

<https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Services/category/661>

### Bromley school admissions

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/primary-school-admissions/making-application-primary-school>

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/secondary-school-admissions/secondary-school-places>

### Bromley education travel assistance

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/help-transport/home-school-travel-transport-assistance-sen>

### SEND Code of Practice 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

### Equality Act 2010

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

### Public Sector Equality Duty

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities>

### Children and Families Act

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>