



# **Accessibility Plan 2015-2018**

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**SECTION 1**  
**STARTING POINTS**

a)

## Objectives

Our School has high ambitions for all students no matter what their identifying characteristics and will aim to provide the correct environment for them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life.

Our school also intends to maintain accessibility for staff and members of the public with disabilities.

The school subscribes fully to the concept of inclusion. There is equality of opportunity for all students to follow a full national curriculum timetable, to take part in extracurricular activities and the full life of the school. The individual needs of all students at this school will be met so that they benefit as fully as possible from the education they receive and fulfil their individual potential.

We recognise the individual needs of all students and maximise everyone's potential: every teacher shares these responsibilities. We aim to remove as many barriers to learning as possible for all students. Staff undertake specialist training e.g. Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Aspergers, ADHD, Hearing and Visual impairment, EAL, Equality and Diversity.

Specialist learning resources are procured and structural changes undertaken if necessary e.g. DDA acoustic and visual work. The impact of this work is to provide the correct environment for all our students to thrive and progress.

The school, with its supportive, integrated environment and in partnership with parents and governors, aims to maximise the self-esteem of all of its students. This, in turn, helps students to realise their potential.

The school has a specialist Resource Base for Hearing and Visual Impaired students with a capacity of 20 students. Students are placed in the Base by the LA, some of whom come from outside of the school's normal catchment area. On average, students in the Base spend 10% of their time in the Base in 1 to 1 or in small groups, and the remaining 80% of their time is spent in the mainstream school supported by TA's.

Importance is placed on the multicultural work carried out throughout the school SMSC provision.

We have a well publicised behaviour policy that the students and staff had a part in constructing. A system of rewards, based on merits, good news postcards that are sent home and commendation prize draw is in place. The behaviour policy is well understood and boundaries are clear.

b)

## **Pupil Data**

As part of our anticipatory duty we aim to identify potential students with disabilities during the transition. This is led by our SENDCO and AHT Ms Gibson.

We will do this by contacting our feeder schools for new admissions, the school nurse/health visitor/ parents and/or the HI/VI unit and the Local Authority.

The school has 761 students on roll. There are 5 year groups based on an admission number of 175. The role is rising. Students come from a full range of housing from social housing to owner occupied.

21 students have a Statement of special educational need or an Educational Health Care Plan, there are 156 students on the special needs register. The school is predominantly white in terms of ethnicity with an increasing number of EAL students (13).

There are 119 students who are eligible for and claim free school meals. However there may be a number in excess of these who do not claim. 192 students are identified as receiving Pupil Premium.

The school is informed of students with individual needs who may be wishing to attend the school by the LA and by feeder schools. Prior to students attending the school the SENDCo will meet with year 6 teachers, feeder school SENCo's, students and parents to discuss requirements, difficulties, support, etc. Visits to the school are often made by students, depending on their need, during the summer term prior to their attending school, eg students with visually impaired etc to aid transition. Contact is also made with external agencies for data, information and to discuss students.

Students are all members of a tutor group and follow the full national curriculum. Adaptations to work or lessons or support is made depending on the pupil's difficulties or needs, or their changing difficulties and needs. Teachers are informed of any pupil who may have a special need via the special needs register and by personal reference at the school's first Inset day. For students who arrive part way through the year information is passed to staff via staff briefings and registers are updated. Specialist training, if required, may also be provided for all staff during this day by external agencies.

### **Attendance**

Attendance during the academic year 2015-16 was in line with national figures (95%)

Students with low attendance have close supervision by the Student Support Managers, Assistant Head Teachers, Achievement Leaders and EWS.

## **Examinations**

Access to internal and external examinations is available to all students. Anyone with difficulties could, dependent on need, use a laptop, have an amanuensis, a reader, a transcription, extra time, rest breaks, have exams completed at home or in hospital etc.

## **Medication**

Medication is required to be taken by a number of students. This is kept in our Student Support Managers office, and given to the students as required. A record is taken of students who are given medication and their names are placed on the medication list, along with other students who may have allergies, medical difficulties, etc. The first-aiders in the school, and all staff are made aware of these students.

## **Withdrawal Classes**

Small extra withdrawal classes or 1-1 tuition takes place weekly to aid students with specific identified learning difficulties.

## **Bullying**

Students in school enjoy a safe and secure environment. We treat bullying as a serious matter. Students are encouraged to say if they are aware of bullying, and it will be dealt with immediately.

## **Racism**

We have a relatively small number of racist incidents. All such incidents are appropriately recorded. Where an issue emerges, the school instigates plans to tackle it promptly.

## **Looked After Children**

We have a small number of looked after children (LAC), and these students are supported by the SENCO, parents and Social Care and Health, and the LA kept informed of their progress.

## **Child Protection**

Child protection arrangements are in place and regularly reviewed by Governors and Leadership Team. The Assistant Head teachers are the 'designated members of staff'. Their training is up to date and regularly reviewed. Designated Safeguarding LEad is Ms L. Gibson with Mr C. Jones as deputy. The school is very well equipped for child protection issues with a large number of staff highly trained.

## **Pastoral Care**

We have a strong pastoral system based on key stage leaders, year teams and tutors, and lead by Assistant Head Teachers and Heads of Year. It is our aim that most tutors

stay with their students for the full five years so relationships are strong, however some specialise in year 7. We have staff who provide a support service, some of whom are employed by the school and some of whom work for outside agencies.

### **Health and Safety**

The school has regular health and safety checks by staff representatives and a governor committee meets regularly to monitor the situation. All staff are aware of the need to report issues of health and safety immediately to the school manager. As part of the Health and Safety policy, students as well as staff are regularly involved in risk assessments, e.g. PSHE, practical subjects, outdoor activities and school visits.

We do not have a hoist in the disabled toilets. The new science labs are equipped with a high adjustable bench.

### **Teaching and Learning**

All students have ICT lessons from year 7 onwards. Students are encouraged to use computers and chromebooks that are available in the school. A number of students have been provided with chromebooks or laptops, either on loan from County, or the school. The school has an ICT Network Manager to ensure all students can access computers and the internet.

As part of the whole school professional development, lessons and staff are observed and supported by the leadership team and Curriculum Team Leaders to ensure all students have full access to the full curriculum. To have continued development and support, external agencies (such as Behaviour Support) have observed some of the lessons.

The Leadership Team ensure all staff within the school have Inset and guidance on new policies, government initiatives, students difficulties etc.

c)

## Accessibility Working Group

In order to ensure that we take into consideration a wide range of views regarding accessibility issues in the school has formed a planning group that will meet as required comprising of:

- Headteacher
- School Manager
- Chair of Governors
- SENCo
- A representative from the HI/VI unit

If our circumstances change we will appoint other relevant members (i.e. parent of a disabled child).

### **Views of those consulted during the development of the plan**

The school welcomes input from parents who have open access to the school. Attendance at parents' evenings is high and it is on these occasions that we receive most feedback either through surveys or verbal feedback. We are improving the use of questionnaires to deploy on these evenings targeting a variety of issues relevant to given year groups. School reports give opportunities for parents to comment and we encourage parents to contact the school at any time should issues arise.

The Head Teacher also holds termly meetings with the Parents/Carers group in order to gather opinions and ideas.

We get plenty of feedback from parents with children with statements of SEN via the annual review process. There is a clear line management system for staff to make their feelings known.

We receive very few complaints from parents with children in the school. However, when we do receive them they are dealt with promptly and by the most appropriate member of staff.

External agencies such as One Point, Behavioural Support, EWS, Educational Psychologist, Speech & Language, Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired and DCC speak favourably of our work.

Close contact is kept with SEN caseworkers, Parental Support Advisers and outside agencies.

The LA fulfils its monitoring and evaluation role by their annual review process. We also buy in a range of key stage consultants.



There is always capacity to make further improvements. Students' attitudes to learning remain good, leadership in the school remains committed to raising standards and providing high quality education for all our students.

Attention is being made at present to upgrade parental access to school and improve the resource base provision for all students with a special educational need.

## **SECTION 2**

### **THE MAIN PRIORITIES IN THE SCHOOL'S ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

# The Main Priorities of the School's Accessibility Plan

In compiling its Accessibility Plan the school will utilise the “support package” provided via the schools extranet. These resources will be used in conjunction with the database software that highlights issues relating to all three areas from the planning duties:

- **Increasing access to the curriculum**

All students initially follow the full curriculum, but adaptations to the timetable, support and subjects taken are constantly reviewed by the AHT's/HoY's, CTL's, SENDCO and VI/Hi and changed if the need arises.

Learners are encouraged to take an adequate amount of physical exercise and to eat and drink healthily. Students are permitted to have bottles of drinking water on their desks during lessons and to take 'little and often'. Facilities are available in school for students to access drinking water. School meals are healthy and nutritious.

We run a full range of competitive teams and have strong links with local sports clubs and teams. We have recently increased the levels and range of after school sports provision and clubs.

Healthy lifestyles are encouraged through Challenge Days as well as all relevant curriculum areas. This includes work on drugs, sex and alcohol; all supported by outside agencies and tailored to individual year groups. PSHCE is coordinated by a member of staff and delivered through Challenge Days under the management of Key Stage Leaders and an Assistant Head Teacher. Specialist sexual health advice is available for students in a secure and confidential drop in with the school nurse.

In terms of students emotional wellbeing and mental health we have a school counsellor from the LA and a CAMHS nurse once a week to support students.

Links with other schools are relatively strong by virtue of the Central Durham Curriculum Partnership Group. There are increasing levels of collaboration with most focus falling on 14-19 developments.

All students are encouraged to take part in a variety of extracurricular activities and sports teams.

The school will continue to focus on a clear assessment of national curriculum levels and access for all of its students.

- **Improving the physical environment**

Following the school's audit we will take the issues of non-compliance detailed in our database and address each item individually and put forward our action plan, timescale and funding methods.

We have reviewed the delivery of support for VI/HI and other SEN and have agreed the development of a shared area for this purpose.

In terms of buildings that are fit for their purpose there is some way to go. Extremes of temperature in the summer cause problems in some classrooms however air conditioning has been fitted to our ICT suites on the first floor of block one. We have improved the accessibility to meals by increasing the size of the main dining hall and are planning to increase provision even further.

All curriculum areas can be accessed on the ground floor if necessary.

- **Providing information in different formats**

Again using the information section within the database we will answer all questions and again propose our action plan, timeframe and funding to address any areas of shortfall.

- We will also use the additional information section within the database in order to cover any issues that are not detailed within the audit, curriculum and information sections.
- We will develop and implement an **Evacuation of Disabled People Plan** and **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan** (PEEP) using the guidance and instructions from British Standards (BS 5588-12:2004).

Information for students with difficulties and information access for parents is delivered in various formats depending on the need of the students and parents. Eg:

- Large print
- Simplified or moderate language or diagrams
- Audio tapes
- Orally
- Differentiation of work
- In various formats – worksheets, notices etc
- By Email

Whole School priorities are lesson observation, starters and plenaries of lessons, literacy and learning throughout the school, CPD needs for INSET training; etc, in order to maintain support and consistency of learning for all students within the school.

Identifying the appropriate format depends on the pupil's difficulties, their needs, subject level and content. Subject teachers work with the Learning Support Department, Teaching Assistants and external agencies to help determine the most appropriate way the format should take.

The school continues to ensure that all students have access to information and the delivery of writing for all students.

## **SECTION 3**

**MAKING IT HAPPEN**

a)

## **Management**

The Governors and Leadership Team are aware of and have input into the school's accessibility plan.

The plan will be revised on a regular basis, taking into account the difficulties students have in the school, or students who may be going to attend. This will be carried out by the Learning Support Department with input from the leadership team, Key Stage Leaders, Student Support Managers, PSA's, Governors, students and parents.

- (i) The School Manager will coordinate the gathering and input of information into the database. This is an ongoing process. The planning group will meet prior to the Governing Body Summer/Spring/Autumn term meeting in order to provide updates on the progress and implementation of the plan.
- (ii) The Health and Safety Committee of the Governors will begin to understand that it is their key responsibility to have a current school's Access Plan in place and identify priorities within their responsibilities. Governors will be kept up-to-date and will monitor and evaluate any changes against the plan.
- (iii) As an agenda item of an appropriate focus briefing or during professional time we offer/provide staff development and training to ensure that all staff are aware of the DDA duties as they apply to the school and also to secure the commitment of staff to removing barriers and increasing access and identify any specific training needs. The Accessibility Plan will be embedded in the School's Improvement Plan (SIP), SEN Plan, Staff Development Programme, Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and Curriculum Planning Programme. Minutes relating to this item will be circulated to Governors to enable them to carry out their evaluation and monitoring role.
- (iv) Aspects of DDA will be highlighted to the students, during challenge days, issues of the week and assemblies.
- (v) Once estimates of costs are received regarding any relevant works these will be considered by the Finance Committee and reported to the full Governing Body meeting. Governors will then determine the priority and source of appropriate finance.

b)

## **Circulation**

- (i) The Access Plan will be available in an easy to read paper copy format or electronically.
- (ii) The Access Plan will be available on the School Shared Document Area.
- (ii) The Headteacher will inform parents/visitors that there is an Access Plan in place via
  - the school prospectus.

Any feedback or comments about the School's Accessibility Plan will be fed back to Governors to enable them to carry out their evaluation and monitoring role.

The indication and expected outcomes/performance criteria and timescales are all highlighted (on the database reports) within this plan.



# **ANNEXES**



**Belmont**  
Community  
School

**Draft Evacuation of Disabled  
People Plan**

**And**

**Draft Personal Emergency  
Evacuation Plan (PEEP)**

## THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Purpose of this Plan is to ensure that individuals with disabilities will be able to evacuate the premises safely in the event of an emergency.

## AWARENESS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

We are aware of the students and staff with disabilities currently in school who require assistance with evacuation and we have attempted to identify other individuals that might have difficulty evacuating the premises or who might need assistance by placing a sign (near visitors' signing in book/reception area) that states:

***If you need assistance in evacuating the premises in the case of an emergency – please make that known to a member of staff.***

At that time we will make visitors aware of our standard **Emergency Evacuation Procedures** i.e. Fire Drill Procedures.

In order to control the evacuation the Evacuation Management Team (EMT), that is made up of:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Head Teachers x 2
- Assistant Head Teachers x 4
- School Manager
- 

In the case of emergency the EMT will 'sweep' the building to ensure that a full evacuation has taken place.

## EVACUATION USING STAIRWAYS

Visually impaired people will be guided on level surfaces by allowing them to take a trained helper's arm and follow the helper. On stairways the helper will descend first and the visually impaired person will be asked to follow with a hand on the helper's shoulder. If a visually impaired person is accompanied by a guide dog, the person will be asked how best the animal can be helped. For example some guide dogs follow on their owner's command but generally, when a helper is leading a visually impaired person, the guide dog will be held by the leash, as apposed to the harness.

Whilst many disabled people are able to descend (or ascend) a stairway, possibly with assistance, others might need to be carried. Where wheelchair users need to be carried, it is generally preferable for them to be carried in their own chair, but evacuation chairs will be made available if necessary. The method of evacuation will be discussed with the individuals concerned and incorporated into their Standard or PEEP.

**NOTE:** Members of staff designated by the EMT to help disabled people evacuate in the event of fire will be fully trained in the techniques of helping them to evacuate in this way i.e. manually handling and any other associated training.

**NOTE:** Where equipment is provided to assist in the evacuation of disabled people (e.g. evacuation chairs, stair traversing devices etc) we will ensure that its operational capability is maintained.

## USE OF PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS (PEEPs)

We recommended Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are for those people with disabilities using the premises on a **regular** basis that require assistance to leave the building. PEEP's will be written by management in conjunction with the individual(s) concerned and are based on knowledge of the structural provisions within the building. PEEP's will explain the method of escape to be used in each area of the building on a case-by-case basis, and when agreed one copy is given to the individual and one copy is retained by the SMT. For those individuals with disabilities that visit the premises we will provide a standard plan when they sign in at reception.

Through the recording of PEEP's, the SMT will be aware of the amount of staff support required for each evacuation.

## REVIEW

This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.



***If you need assistance in evacuating the premises in the case of an emergency please make it known to the receptionist and member of staff you are visiting.***

***Thank you***

***P. Marsden  
Head Teacher***

# SCHOOL FLOOR PLAN

SECTION 1-1

