Accessibility Policy and Plan

2017-18

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SENCo: Miss L Culshaw

1. Introduction to Accessibility Policy

This plan identifies the ongoing actions of the Governing Body of Ark Helenswood to increase access to education for pupils in the following three areas:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum.
- Improving the physical environment of the Academy to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services.
- Improving the delivery of written information to disabled pupils.

Ark Helenswood will develop individual plans in line with this plan, which will be fully supported and resourced by the Governing Body and will be implemented from November 2017 onwards. Each plan will be reviewed annually and should be read alongside Ark Helenswood Academy Equal Opportunities Policy and Equalities Objectives.

2. Vision and Values

Ark Helenswood is committed to providing a fully accessible environment and curriculum, which values, includes all children, and enables them to achieve their very best taking into account their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

Ark Helenswood aspires to remove all barriers to ensure that every child can enjoy and fully participate in all aspects of school life and benefit from the full breadth of the opportunities we provide.

Ark Helenswood is committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion within our school.

3. Definition of Disability by the Equality Act 2010

A person is a disabled person if they have a physical and/or mental impairment, which has what the law, calls "a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.

In relation to physical impairment:

- Conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs are covered.
- HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis are covered from the point of diagnosis.
- Severe disfigurement (such as scarring) is covered even if it has no physical impact on the person with the disfigurement, provided the long-term requirement is met.
- People who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, are automatically treated as disabled under the Act.
- Mental impairment includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

The other tests to apply to decide if someone has the protected characteristic of disability are:

- Whether the effect of the impairment is to make it more difficult and/or time-consuming for a person to carry out an activity compared to someone who does not have the impairment, and this causes more than minor or trivial inconvenience.
- If the activities that are made more difficult are 'normal day-to-day activities' at work or at home.

Whether the condition has this impact without taking into account the effect of any medication the person is taking or any aids, assistance, or adaptations they have, like a wheelchair, walking stick, assistance dog or special software on their computer. The exception to this is the wearing of glasses or contact lenses where it is the effect while the person is wearing the glasses or contact lenses, which is taken into account.

For Example: Someone who has ADHD might be considered to have a disability even if their medication controls their condition so well that they rarely experience any symptoms, if without the medication the ADHD would have long-term adverse effects. Progressive conditions and those with fluctuating or recurring effects are included, such as depression, provided they meet the test of having a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

4. Definition of Special Education Needs

- A child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty, which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child or young person has a learning difficulty if they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children and young people of the same age.
- Many, although not all, disabled children will have a special educational need if they have difficulty accessing education or if they need special educational provision to be made for them.
- Children or young people must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language in their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

5. Key Objectives

The school recognises that many of its pupils, visitors and staff, whether disabled or otherwise, have individual needs when using school facilities. We recognise that for all pupils, the nature of their disabilities may mean that they experience specific difficulties related to accessing education, and the physical environment. As part of the on-going commitment to the delivery of an inclusive educational service, we will endeavour to ensure that all our pupils receive as high a standard of education as their counterparts in mainstream schools. In order to ensure that the educational services it provides effectively meet the needs of disabled pupils the school will:

- Inform all staff of this access policy so that the provision of educational services ensures the inclusion of all of our pupils. Such communications will address the legal obligation of staff, and the school.
- Make all prospective employees aware of the disabilities of the pupils in the school. Any applicant for a new position will be made aware of their role in delivering the curriculum, personal care, therapy programmes and maintaining the health and safety of the pupils at all times.
- Provide appropriate training for staff, which will explain the school access policy, ensure the effective implementation, and monitoring of it, encourage all visitors to school including suppliers and contractors, to adopt similar policies towards disabled pupils.
- Consult with disabled pupils, parents, staff and disability organisations.
- Regularly review whether its education (and other) services are both accessible and effective, and take appropriate action.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this plan on a regular basis.
- Operate an accessible complaints procedure whereby disabled people can make improvement suggestions and request assistance.
- Ensure that information about the Accessibility Plan is published on the school's website.

6. Access to Non-Educational Services within Educational Buildings

Ark Helenswood also hires the facilities to non-educational and community bodies. This is an important income stream and provides a strong link with the local community.

As a school, we comply with all of the regulations relating to the provision of non-educational services to the public by providing access to all users. The provision of non-educational services may include activities such as:

- Governors meetings;
- Services offered to parents, such as meetings to present the annual report, admission and exclusion hearings where an appeal is by the parents;
- Leisure time activities for children or adults without any element of educational development;
- The use of school sports facilities by the local community or the hiring of school accommodation to members of the public;
- After School Clubs, activity clubs run by private hirers.

7. The Physical Environment

Ark Helenswood upper school was built in 1958 and the lower school in the 1970s. Not all areas around the schools are on one level. There is a lift at the upper school site, which allows users to access the raised ground floor. Lessons are brought down to lower classrooms as required for students. Employees are part of the school, both in terms of their own interaction with pupils and parents, and the ease with which they work within their physical environment.

- Signage around the school adheres to current Health and Safety regulations.
- Lighting is suitable for purpose in all rooms with blinds in most rooms to allow for adjustable lighting.
- The school is aware of the affect that noises e.g. lights buzzing, can affect the ability of the children to work and concentrate. This is kept to a minimum and the premises staff undertake repairs as soon as possible.
- The evacuation procedures are displayed around the school and there is a fire drill regularly.
- There is a schedule of regular evaluation of the school site for accessibility.
- The premises team monitors the general internal condition of the school on a daily basis, also monitoring Health and Safety issues and completing statutory building checks. The school staff note any maintenance items via request on the premises request sheet. These requests are attended to promptly and contractors are brought in for issues not within the remit of the premises team.

8. Access to the Curriculum.

Ark Helenswood Academy offers a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and provides additional specialist provision to enable all pupils with learning difficulties to access the curriculum and aid their educational development. The teaching environment / facilities include:

- Teachers and learning support staff have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils through regular INSET days, individual courses and network training days.
- Staff work closely with colleagues from the Inclusion Department to ensure that pupils are enabled to access all curriculum opportunities, have appropriate means of communication and to devise and review targets for inclusion on pupils' profiles and support plans.
- Individual targets are set to allow all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability in all lessons.
- All pupils take part in music, drama and physical activities as part of the access to the curriculum.
- Staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by our pupils to use equipment in practical sessions.
- Pupils have access to computers in class where needed.
- School visits are accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment.
- There are high expectations of all pupils.
- Staff constantly seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation.

9. Flexibility of Teaching

Ark Helenswood Academy teachers and support staff are flexible enough to adapt their teaching approaches to enable our pupils to learn effectively in their classrooms.

- Staff present work in many different ways using a variety of equipment. Work can be carried out individually, in small groups or as a whole class.
- Staff enable the pupils to show their interest, knowledge and skills despite their difficulties e.g. communication through visual or kinaesthetic means.
- Visual timetables are given where appropriate to ensure pupils are aware of the routines required throughout the day.
- Reward systems are in place to support the children with positive strategies.
- Detailed pupil information is given to all relevant staff to help with planning lessons.
- Specific resources are used to differentiate the curriculum to enable all pupils to feel secure and make progress.
- Special considerations are in place for pupils taking part in tests e.g. rest breaks, adult readers, scribes are provided if appropriate.

10. Arranging the Classroom

Each classroom is set out to provide the most positive environment to work in, to ensure the pupil learns effectively.

- Classrooms have sufficient space for all the children and young people.
- Toilet facilities are available close to each classroom. Signage is in place to signpost users of all abilities to the facilities.
- Varieties of resources are used to ensure that the pupil learns effectively.
- IT support is invaluable in providing access to the curriculum and assistive technology is used where appropriate throughout school to support the learning of disabled pupils.

11. Access to Education

Ark Helenswood Academy recognises that all disabled children should have access to education in accordance with the Equality Act and adheres to the code of practice, which advises on the statutory responsibilities of education bodies in the preparation of accessibility strategies and seeks to:

- Improve access to the **physical environment** of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education as identified in the School Development Plan.
- Increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils are as equally prepared for life, as are able-bodied pupils in mainstream schools; this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist **aids and assistive technology**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.
- Improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable period.

12. Making Adjustments

The Equality Act states that schools are not expected to change their premises. They are however, expected to make long-term proactive plans for improving access to their buildings through their planning duties and this document should be read in conjunction with the School Development Plan.

Ark Helenswood will continue to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled pupils, parents or visitors attending the school are not discriminated against. Making reasonable adjustments could include:

- Changes to practices or procedures;
- Changes to physical features;
- Changes to how learners are assessed;
- Providing extra support and aids (such as specialist teachers or equipment).

Accessibility Plan for 2017-18

Target	Tasks	Timescale	Resources	Responsibility	Monitoring
Access to Curriculum Ensure ICT appropriate for pupils with disabilities.	Review accessibility of ICT (including whiteboards) using specialist expertise e.g. Sensory needs service, SFE Involve pupils in review of hard & software. Purchase Communicate in Print Train TAs and admin staff on use of Communicate in Print.	Regular visits Jul18 Sep17 – done Oct17 - done	Time from Sensory needs service and SFE 1 day x SFE & LCU	SFE & SENCo	Leadership Team and Governors

Access to Curriculum Create effective learning environments for all utilising feedback from pupil groups.	Reinforce responsibilities of all teachers as outlined in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement. Ongoing programme of staff training in disability awareness to reflect diverse needs of students within the school and anticipatory duties. Focus in 2017/18 on SEMH and ASD. Circulate "Reasonable Adjustments" Classroom Checklist to all staff. Communicate student interventions via Pupil Passports to all staff. Ensure all classrooms and resources are organised in accordance with pupil need. Seek issues and feedback from "Teaching and Learning" focus group and Pupil Survey.	Training Sep17 – done Sep17 CPD – done Nov17 – done Ongoing Jul18	Create folders of pupil passports for both staffrooms. Regular updating of provision map software Tracking via excel provision map Survey monkey questionnaires Development of LSU	All staff Inclusion team SENCO and LSU Focus Group	SENCo through lesson observations and sampling lesson planning Leadership Team Leadership Team and Governors

	Develop LSU to support students with complex needs to access their learning.	Sep17 - done			
Access to wider curriculum Increase participation in school activities.	Audit participation in extra-curricular activities and identify any barriers. Ensure school activities are accessible for all students.	Jul18 Ongoing	Training needed on risk assessments for trips and extra-curricular activities.	SENCo and AP	Leadership Team Governors

Impact Analysis Ensure all policies consider the implications of Disability Access.	Analyse impact of Behaviour Code, School Rules, Anti-Bullying Policy, Educational Visits, Homework and Health Provision in relation to pupils with disabilities. Involve School Council in all reviews. Consult pupils, parents and staff on any proposed changes.	July 18 Ongoing	Leadership Team and SENCo time to review policies. Development time for homework section of the website. AP T&L, AHOFs and Inclusion Team.	Leadership Team, Inclusion Team and SENCo	Leadership Team and Governors
Premises Increase site access to meet diverse needs of pupils, staff, parents and community users.	Review personal evacuation plans. Look into feasibility of a low arousal space. Review signage of evacuation procedures, internet safety, fire drill etc especially for VI students Review new signage of room functions.	Aug17 – done Space to be completed Aug18 Aug17 - done Aug17 - done	SENCO and operations manager time. LSU focus group £5K	Operations manager TAs trained in Communicate in Print	Leadership Team
Attitudes To promote positive attitudes to disability	Review PSHE (Life Skills) Curriculum Review Assembly Programme: to ensure focus on Different/Same theme Involve local disability groups in assemblies and visits to school for parents and students	Aug17 – done ASD assembly Apr18 - ongoing	£150 for any new resources	SENCo	Leadership Team and Governors

	Regular items for newsletter highlighting achievements of pupils with disabilities	Ongoing			
Newsletters and Information

Availability of documents in alternative formats. | Large print and audio formats etc as required.

Review accessibility of newsletter and letters for parents.

Homework information available as information sheets in alternative formats as appropriate.

Use of Communicate in Print software. | Jul18

Jul18

Jul18

Aug17 - done | IT Team

SENCO & Literacy HLTA time

AP T&L Time | Admin. Manager | Leadership Team and Governors |