



**First Thought
Independent School**

FIRST THOUGHT CARE SERVICES

Accessibility Plan

2026-2027

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1. Aims

Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable pupils with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities

Our school aims to treat all its pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind.

We provide a highly personalised and supportive learning environment designed to meet the needs of pupils with autism and severe learning difficulties (SLD), including those with complex needs. We are committed to fostering an inclusive, nurturing and developmentally appropriate setting in which every pupil can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Our accessibility plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request.

Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.

The school supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan.

Our school's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, the complaints procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

We will include a range of stakeholders in the development of this accessibility plan, including:

- Pupils
- parents/carers
- staff
- governors of the school

2. Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a pupil with disabilities faces in comparison with a pupil without disabilities. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

Academies, including free schools, if applicable add/amend: This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Action Plan

This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The information set out in the column of 'current good practice' are examples to guide your own analysis of your current practice. They are not a thorough representation of good practice – you will need to adapt it to suit your school's context.

AIM	CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO COMPLETE ACTIONS BY	SUCCESS CRITERIA
Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability	- Highly personalised, structured teaching using the <i>EQUALS Informal</i> and <i>Semi-Formal Curricula</i> tailored to pupils' developmental needs. - Predictable, sensory-considerate classrooms that reduce anxiety and support engagement. - Total Communication approach (Makaton, PECS, visual supports) embedded across learning. - Multisensory and practical teaching promoting communication, cognition, and independence.	To ensure all pupils have access to a curriculum that meets their developmental, sensory, and communication needs.	Continue implementing the EQUALS Informal and Semi-Formal Curricula tailored to individual learning pathways. Ensure schemes of work and lesson planning reflect pupils' EHCP outcomes and personalised learning targets. Maintain consistent use of visual and sensory supports to enable curriculum access. Review and adapt teaching strategies through the assess-plan-do-review cycle.		Ongoing	Pupils demonstrate progress against individual targets and EHCP outcomes. Learning walks and work scrutiny evidence curriculum access across ability levels. Curriculum documentation evidences appropriate differentiation and personalisation.
		To embed high-quality teaching	Embed total communication approaches		Ongoing	Observations show consistent

	• Close collaboration with parents, carers, and external professionals to ensure joined-up provision. • Regular review of EHCP outcomes through the assess–plan–do–review cycle.	strategies that support communication, independence, and engagement.	(Makaton, PECS, visual timetables, communication aids) throughout the curriculum. Provide CPD for staff on communication, sensory integration, and autism-friendly pedagogy. Increase opportunities for pupils to develop independence and problem-solving within lessons.			communication and engagement strategies across classrooms. Staff demonstrate increased confidence and skill in delivering adapted learning. Pupils show improved participation, communication, and independence in lessons.
		To strengthen cross-disciplinary support within the curriculum.	Embed therapeutic targets (SaLT, OT, Physio) within classroom activities and planning. Continue joint working with external professionals to review and align support plans. Share therapy-informed strategies across staff teams to ensure consistent implementation.		Ongoing	Therapy goals evident in lesson planning and daily routines. Pupils demonstrate improved access to learning through integrated support. Positive feedback from therapists and evidence of shared working.
		To ensure the physical and	Maintain sensory-		Ongoing	Reduction in anxiety-

		sensory environment supports learning and regulation.	considerate classrooms with structured routines and low-arousal design. Provide access to sensory regulation areas, movement breaks, and individualised supports. Continue staff training on sensory processing and environmental adaptations.			related behaviours; increased time on task. Learning environments consistently reflect sensory-friendly principles. Staff demonstrate understanding of how to adapt environments to meet individual needs.
		To ensure access to enrichment and wider curriculum opportunities.	Plan inclusive off-site visits and community learning linked to pupils' communication and independence targets. Adapt extracurricular and enrichment activities to meet diverse needs. Review participation data to ensure equity of access across all groups.		Ongoing	All pupils have opportunities to access enrichment and community-based learning. Evidence of engagement and progress in personal, social, and life skills. Parent/carer and pupil feedback indicates positive experiences and inclusion.

Improve and maintain access to the physical environment	• Ramps are in place to provide step-free access where required. • Corridors are of sufficient width to allow wheelchair access. • Accessible toilets and changing facilities are available on the ground floor. • Some learning areas are located on the ground floor. • Toilets with bathtubs are provided for pupils requiring assisted washing or personal care. • A sensory room is available to support pupils with sensory and emotional needs.	Continue to improve and maintain access to the physical environment for all pupils and visitors.	Conduct regular accessibility audits to ensure all areas remain compliant and safe. Review physical environment annually to identify any new barriers to access. Maintain and upgrade accessible facilities as required. Involve pupils and parents with disabilities in reviewing accessibility needs.		Ongoing	Accessibility audits show continued compliance with legal requirements. Feedback from pupils, parents, and staff confirms accessibility needs are met. Facilities remain fit for purpose and inclusive for all users.
Improve the delivery of information to pupils with a disability	• Total Communication approach using speech, symbols, signs, visuals, and objects of reference to ensure accessibility for all pupils.	To strengthen the use of Total Communication across all areas of the school.	Embed consistent use of symbols, signs, visual timetables, and communication aids in all classrooms and shared spaces. Monitor classroom practice to ensure visual		Ongoing	Visual, verbal and symbol-based communication strategies used consistently across all areas of the school. Learning walks and observations evidence that pupils

	• Use of Makaton, PECS, visual timetables, and Now and Next boards to support understanding and routine. • Information and instructions presented through multisensory methods (spoken, visual, tactile, and interactive). • Consistent, predictable communication routines embedded across the school day. • Adapted learning materials, including simplified language, Widgit symbols, and pictorial supports. • Staff trained in communication methods, sensory needs, and the use of assistive technology where appropriate.		and verbal communication strategies are used consistently.			understand instructions and routines through visual and verbal cues. Increased pupil engagement and reduction in communication-related anxiety or frustration.
		To develop staff confidence and expertise in communication and accessibility strategies.	Provide ongoing CPD on Makaton, PECS, Intensive Interaction, and assistive technology. Share good practice through peer observation and communication-focused supervision discussions.		Ongoing	All staff demonstrate competence in using Makaton, PECS and other communication strategies. Training records and CPD evaluations show improved staff confidence. Consistency of approach verified through classroom observations and pupil progress in communication targets.
		To enhance access to assistive communication tools for pupils who	Review current use of devices (e.g. iPads with communication apps, VOCA		Ongoing	Appropriate AAC tools available and in regular use by identified pupils.

	Pupil preferences and communication profiles recorded and shared with all staff to ensure consistency.	benefit from AAC support.	systems) and identify gaps. Work with therapists to match pupils to appropriate assistive technology and provide staff training in implementation.			Pupil communication profiles evidence increased independence and self-expression. Feedback from staff and therapists confirms tools are being used effectively to meet EHCP outcomes.
		To ensure all information is accessible and meaningful to pupils with diverse communication needs.	Adapt written, visual, and spoken information using simplified language, Widgit symbols, and multisensory formats. Review classroom and school signage to ensure it supports understanding and independence.		Ongoing	All written and visual information simplified, symbol-supported, or presented in a multisensory format where appropriate. Visual signage and classroom displays clearly support communication and understanding. Pupils demonstrate improved ability to follow instructions and access the curriculum independently.
		To maintain up-to-date communication profiles and promote	Review and update communication passports and pupil		Ongoing	All pupils have an up-to-date communication passport/profil

		individualised information sharing.	profiles at least annually. Ensure all staff have access to and understand each pupil's preferred communication methods.			e accessible to staff. Staff can accurately describe and use pupils' preferred communication methods. Annual review meetings evidence that communication strategies remain current and effective.
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4. Monitoring Arrangements

This document will be reviewed every 3 years, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

It will be reviewed by the SLT.

It will be approved by proprietor.

5. Links with other Policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Risk assessment policy
- Health and safety policy
- Equality and Diversity policy

Special educational needs (SEN) information report

SEND policy

Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy

List any other related policies and procedures that the school has here.