**Equality Statement**

At Hopefields School we are committed to ensuring equality and opportunity to all members of our school community. Regarding safeguarding, the school always aims to ensure that no one is treated less favourably than anyone else. The Equality Act 2010 defines these responsibilities. Regarding this, this Policy, including all its procedures and systems will have due regard to:

• Eliminating discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

• Equal opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

• Awareness of this duty to have due regard when making decisions or acting in order to assess whether that action will have implications for people with protected characteristics

• Consider equality implications before and at the time that this policy is developed and reviewed and keep these implications under review on a regular basis

It is unlawful to discriminate in the following areas, termed protective characteristics:

Age
Disability
Gender
Gender reassignment
Marriage and civil partnership
Race
Religion or Belief
Sexual orientation and Pregnancy and maternity

**Aims:**

**Hopefields School Accessibility Plan**

**3-year period covered by the plan: 2023-2026**

The purpose of the plan is to:

• Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
• Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided

• Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

Hopefields School has high ambitions for all students including those with SEND; it facilitates and expects students to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life. Hopefields has a caring, supportive ethos that seeks to value all individuals and treat them fairly and with respect. Our school promotes equality of opportunity for disabled people: students, staff, parents, carers and others who use the school. By promoting a positive attitude towards disabled people, we aim to eliminate discrimination and harassment related to disability and thereby fulfil an essential component of our ethos.

We are committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access which values and includes all students, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

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

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

**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 he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ adverse effect on his or her 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 students with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled students faces in comparison with non-disabled students. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to the premises.

It is a requirement that the school’s Accessibility Plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary.

The Accessibility Plan shows how access is to be improved for disabled children, staff and visitors to the school within a given timeframe and anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practical.

Attached is a set of actions showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

**Information from student data and school audit:**

Hopefields School is an independent special school spanning ages 11-16. The school offers a high needs provision.

Initial information to establish the profile and needs of pupils entering the school is gathered by school staff. The information is collated prior to starting school by:

• Pre-school visits
• Parent meetings
• Induction meetings
• Information gathered from previous settings and providers, alongside ECHP and consultation paperwork provided by the LA

Regular contact is made with parents and during this contact parents are asked to discuss any disabilities a student may have. The parents are regularly asked to explain how school could help in addressing the needs of the student who is attending Hopefields.

This feeds into and informs the points for action including:

• Written information • Physical environment • Curriculum access

**Information gathering in relation to the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees:**

Hopefields School follows government guidance on the collecting of information on disabled employees and the recruitment of new staff to ensure they have the best experience possible and are able to access every part of school life. It will be analysed by our school to show where disabled staff are deployed across the school. Other areas of analysis will cover: TLR payments, permanency of staff, CPD, disciplinary and capability proceedings, harassment and bullying, sickness and those leaving the profession early. Those staff who voluntarily provide information will be assured that it is used confidentially to inform working practice and conditions. All staff will be supported by the HR agreed policies on sickness and returning to work.

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

Hopefields School Accessibility Plan has been developed and drawn up based upon information supplied by our HR company, and consultations with students, parents and staff. Other outside agencies and specialists have also been consulted.

Students in our school have provided their views to the group on accessibility issues and the provision they are receiving. From the Annual Review of student EHCPs, we collate student and parent views to inform our scheme. Through respectful relationships with disabled students, we acknowledge their feelings and respond to their views.

The needs of all students and staff, including disabled students, are considered when planning and delivering all aspects of the curriculum. Subject leaders have considered and suggested possible adaptations to support access to the curriculum, class teachers are ably supported by the Headteacher/Head of Curriculum and Learning and highly skilled teaching assistants in ensuring that teaching matches the learning needs of all children. Each teacher is aware of the individual needs of all of the students. This informs the;

* Physical environment
* Curriculum provision
* And the written information shared.

Views of the parents and carers are gathered at the beginning of the year and there are regular occasions throughout the year where details can be updated. Data is stored centrally on each child to inform the accessibility requirements of the school.

**The main priorities in the school’s plan:**

***Increasing awareness, value and access of disabled students and staff in the school curriculum.***

The development of the school curriculum has intention and ambition, including the principles of inclusion, diversity, accessibility & cultural capital. We aim to raise awareness, increase access, and celebrate the contribution everybody makes to society as a whole. In order to ensure that all students are catered for, staff work closely with the Headteacher and each subject leader.

Hopefields have an inhouse Occupational Therapist and where necessary outside agencies are contacted for specialist support.

***Improving the outdoor physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of outdoor learning:***

Hopefields School is built on a single level and benefits from a fully accessible outside area. Students have helped in the development of the outside garden space, which includes a tranquil quiet area for reflection and mindfulness. They have opportunities to attend different sports facilities that are fully accessible to disabled students as part of their curriculum.

***The school seeks to improve the physical environment so that it is accessible and welcoming to all.***

Hopefields School is a single level building thus ensuring full access for anyone with a disability. There are fully accessible toilet facilities and an onsite sensory space.

Onsite car parking for visitors has suitable bays, large enough to easily accommodate disabled visitors and space for the school minibus.

**Leadership, coordination and implementation:**

The Hopefields School senior leadership team a will ensure that the 2023-26 Accessibility Plan is lead, implemented and evaluated.

The SLT will ensure that quotes for work to be carried out are sought and that the needs of the students inform the setting of the budget. The School Accessibility Plan will be shared and coordinated with other services and agencies e.g. and accessible on the school’s website.

The attached action plans set out the priorities set by the school to improve accessibility of Hopefields School under the headings of:

* Increasing awareness, value and access of disabled students in the school curriculum
* Improving the outdoor physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of outdoor learning
* The school seeks to improve the physical environment so that it is accessible and welcoming to all

**Monitoring arrangements:**

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

The action plan will be monitored, and impact considered throughout that time span.

**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
	+ Curriculum Policy
	+ Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Accessibility Targets** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Objectives** | **Strategies** | **Outcome** |
| **SHORT TERM** | 1 | Ensure compliance with the school’s aims, the Equality & Diversity Policy, and the operation of the school’s SEND Policy  | Staff informed of requirements and obligations regarding the Accessibility Plan in briefings and training sessions/ongoing CPD. | Staff aware of requirements  |
|  | 2 | Liaise with mainstream and other special schools to share good practice and strategies  | Arrange visits for staff to observe working practices as well as reciprocal visits to Hopefields School. | Increased staff confidence and competence in delivering the curriculum to students with disabilities  |
| **MEDIUM TERM** | 3 | Ongoing support for teachers on differentiating the curriculum  | Ensure pathway curriculum is fully rolled out and embedded across the school. Further refinements to continue on an ongoing basis to ensure the curriculum remains exceptionally well-matched to student’s needs. | Teachers are able to fully meet the requirements of student’s needs in accessing the curriculum  |
|  | 4 | Improve access to curriculum by use of assistive technology  | To consult with OH on assistive technology Observe examples of assistive technology supporting students effectively in other schools. | Increased student communication skills Increased student independence accessing the curriculum  |
| **LONG TERM** | 5 | Ensure Hopefields School students have regular opportunities to feedback on effectiveness of initiatives in the local community  | Development of students ‘Safeguarding Ambassadors’.Participation at local meetings on a range of issues that potentially affect Hopefields students. | Students at Hopefields School have a greater say on what works well and what needs to be further improved for them in their local community.  |
|  | 6 | To continue to develop new and improved resources that increase pupils’ access to learning  | To further develop our links with the OH Digital Learning team and to continue to research new technologies in support of our curriculum. | Improved use of technology to support learning across the curriculum  |
|  | 7 | To ensure annually that all staff and students are consulted on their views on accessibility to and across the site  | Parent meetings (including students) annually. | Improved access/modifications to the school environment.  |

**Appendix A – changes/updates/amendments**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Change made** | **Action to complete** | **Staff name** |
| 16.11.23 | REVIEW |  | AL |
| 16.9.24 | REVIEW |  | AL |
| 01.09.25 | REVIEW |  | EI |