Accessibility Plan
2025-2028

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Updated	

Accessibility Plan
The Divergent School Harborough
2025-2028

What is an Accessibility Plan?

All schools must have an **accessibility plan**. This is a written document that explains how the school will make sure disabled pupils can access and benefit from everything the school offers.

The plan must show how the school will:

- **Increase access to the curriculum**

Schools must identify and remove barriers so that disabled pupils can take part in lessons and learning.
This includes things like:

  - Adjusting teaching approaches
  - Providing appropriate support, equipment, or resources
  - Differentiating tasks
  - Helping pupils engage fully in trips, clubs, and activities

- **Improve the physical environment**

Schools must consider how the buildings and grounds can be adapted so that disabled pupils can move around safely and independently.
This may include:

  - Improving access routes (ramps, lifts, handrails)
  - Better signage or lighting
  - Adapting classrooms or toilets
  - Ensuring emergency procedures are accessible

- **Improve the way information is delivered**

Schools need to make sure information is provided in formats that disabled pupils can understand if they struggle with standard methods.
This might involve:

  - Large print, Braille, or audio formats
  - Simplified language
  - Using visual supports
  - Providing information electronically where needed

Other Requirements

- The plan **must be in writing**.
- It should normally cover a **three-year period**.
- It must be **reviewed regularly** and updated when necessary.
- The school must **implement** the plan and make sure appropriate resources are available.
- The plan may be examined during inspections (e.g. Ofsted).
- These duties sit alongside the school's ongoing need to make **reasonable adjustments** for individuals.

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Aims
Under the Equality Act 2010, all schools are required to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of our plan is to:
- Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate fully in the curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable pupils with disabilities to access education, facilities, and services effectively.
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils, families, and staff.

At The Divergent School Harborough, we are committed to **treating all pupils fairly, with dignity and respect**, and ensuring equal access to opportunities without discrimination. We believe that all children and young people are entitled to **explore, discover, and dream**, and we actively foster an environment in which curiosity, independence, and wellbeing are prioritised.

Our school values Independence**, Belonging, Curiosity, Respect**; underpin everything we do. Within this, we promote **compassion and cooperation** by encouraging sharing, teamwork, awareness of others' needs, and celebrating positive social behaviours. All members of the school community; pupils, staff, and families are expected to support these values.

The accessibility plan is available on the school website, with paper copies provided upon request. The school ensures that all staff are trained in equality, disability awareness, and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. We also work in partnership with external agencies to develop and implement strategies that remove barriers and improve access for all pupils.

Legislation and Guidance
This plan complies with:
- **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**
- **Department for Education (DfE) guidance on the Equality Act 2010 for schools**

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if they have a **physical or mental impairment** with a **substantial and long-term** adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Under the SEND Code of Practice:
- "Long-term" means **a year or more**
- "Substantial" means **more than minor or trivial**

This includes **sensory impairments** (e.g., sight or hearing loss) and **long-term health conditions** such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, or cancer.

Schools are required to make **reasonable adjustments** to remove barriers and prevent disabled pupils from being disadvantaged compared to their peers. This can include providing auxiliary aids, modifying learning resources, or adapting premises and teaching environments.

Key Commitments of The Divergent School Harborough
- Ensuring all areas of the school are as physically and digitally accessible as possible
- Adapting teaching approaches and resources to meet individual needs
- Providing personalised pathways for learning that enable pupils with SEND to succeed
- Working closely with families, staff, and external specialists to continually improve accessibility

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Action Plan

Objective	Action	Success Criteria / Measure	Timescale	Responsibility
Curriculum Access	Review current curricular barriers by consulting with disabled pupils, parents, and staff about what prevents full engagement	A report with identified barriers & proposed curriculum adaptations	By **Dec 2025**	Head Teacher
	Provide staff training on differentiated teaching and inclusive pedagogies	≥ 80% of classroom staff attend training; staff include adapted strategies in planning	Training by **Mar 2026**, then ongoing	Head Teacher
	Use assistive technology (e.g., text-to-speech, speech-to-text, symbol software)	Evidence of AT use in classrooms; feedback from pupils; improved participation	From **Sep 2026**, review annually	Head Teacher
	Make extracurricular activities accessible (clubs, trips)	Risk assessments adapted; additional support in place; all pupils able to join	From **2025-2026 year**, monitor termly	Head Teacher
Physical Environment	Undertake an accessibility audit of the school buildings	Written audit report identifying physical barriers (ramps, signage, lighting, toilets)	By **Nov 2025**	Head Teacher
	Make priority physical improvements identified in the audit	Improvements completed (e.g. ramp installed, handrails, signage)	By **2027**	Head Teacher
	Review emergency evacuation procedures for disabled pupils	Up-to-date personal evacuation plans, staff aware, drills run	By **Mid-2026**, then test annually	Head Teacher
Information Access	Review how information is currently provided to parents/pupils	Identify where information is not accessible (format, language, medium)	By **Jan 2026**	Head Teacher
	Produce key school documents (e.g., newsletters, policies) in accessible formats	Alternative formats available: large print, easy read, digital / audio	From **2026**, as needed	Head Teacher
	Establish a system for requesting accessible materials	A clear, published process; parents & pupils know how to ask	By **Sep 2025**, included in website + communications	Head Teacher
	Seek feedback from disabled pupils & their families about information needs	Annual survey / feedback; action log with responses	First feedback by **Summer 2026**, then annually	Head Teacher

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Monitoring & Review

- The Accessibility Plan will be **formally reviewed** once a year by the Leadership Team, and Advisory Board. ([Council for Disabled Children](#))
- Progress on each action will be recorded in a **monitoring log**.
- Any barriers that turn out to be more challenging or costly than expected will be re-assessed, and the plan will be adjusted if necessary.
- The plan will be **published on the school website**, and a paper copy will be made available on request.
- When publishing, we will also consider making accessible versions of this plan (e.g. easy-read, screen-reader friendly). ([Council for Disabled Children](#))

Resources / Budget

- Budget to cover **accessibility audit cost**.
- Funds earmarked for **premises adaptations** (signage, evacuation equipment).
- Training budget for **staff inclusion / differentiation training**.
- IT budget for **assistive technologies**.
- Administrative budget to support **alternate format production** (large print, audio, etc).

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Advisory Board/ ChEO**: Approve the plan; ensure funding; monitor progress.
- **Headteacher**: Lead on strategic implementation; coordinate cross-team work. Coordinate the physical environment changes; oversee audit and building works.
- **Teaching Staff** : Champion the needs of disabled pupils; lead the curriculum and information access work; gather feedback.
- **Admin Team**: Handle production of accessible information; maintain processes for requests.
- **All Staff**: Participate in training; apply inclusive practices in classrooms; consult with pupils.

Communication & Engagement

- Share the plan at an **Advisory Board meeting**, with parents / carers, and with pupils.
- Invite **feedback** from staff, pupils, and parents on how the plan is working and where improvements are still needed.

Risks / Challenges & Mitigations

- *Risk*: Physical improvements may be expensive.
  Mitigation: Carry out a phased implementation, prioritising the most critical barriers first (as identified in the audit).
- *Risk*: Staff resistance / lack of understanding of inclusion.
  Mitigation: Provide regular professional development, share success stories and feedback from pupils to build buy-in

Appendix 1: Accessibility Audit

Statement	
Key personnel/groups consulted about accessibility issues	Charlie Smith- Head Teacher
Actions approved on	25/11/2025
Signed	
Review date	November 2025

Participation and learning

Question	Yes	No	Action required
Do staff have the necessary training to teach and support those with a disability?	X	☐	All Teaching staff and Support staff access training regarding SEN/D policy and it is continually updated annually or when necessary. Pupils with specific disabilities and/or medical conditions have their needs detailed in Individual Care Plans/Pupil Profiles and staff are trained as necessary.
Are there opportunities for all to achieve, including in music, drama and physical activities?	X	☐	A fully inclusive curriculum is delivered to all pupils including sensory circuits and a life skills curriculum.
Do staff recognize and plan for the additional time and effort needed by those with disabilities?	X	☐	This is taken into account in all areas of the curriculum and extra time and support is given to children with SEN/D in line with statutory testing requirements e.g the use of scribes.
Are alternative experiences made available for those who cannot participate in particular activities given alternative experiences?	X	☐	Alternative arrangements and activities are in place for any pupil who is unable to participate (i.e. short term disability – broken limb)
Has ICT equipment been fitted with additional software/hardware to allow access by those with a disability?	X	☐	Yes classes have interactive whiteboards and access to touch screen learn pad, speech to text dictation software
Are outings and visits accessible to all?	X	☐	Yes, where necessary additional adults, alternative modes of transport would be used, detailed in the Risk Assessment.
Do staff have high expectations for all?	X	☐	Yes
Do all staff strive to remove barriers to learning and participation?	X	☐	Yes
Are reasonable adjustments made where necessary, and is there provision of auxiliary aids and services where need is identified?	X	☐	Reasonable adjustments are in place where necessary

Design of the premises

Question	Yes	No	Action required

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Is the layout accessible in:	☐	☐	
• learning areas	X	☐	Classrooms are generally accessible for the needs of our students, those who may have physical difficulties, downstairs learning rooms and accessible toilet . Allotment has accessible pathways
• social areas	X	☐	Dining hall, sensory room, soft play and playgrounds are all accessible
Can wheelchair users move freely around premises?	☐	X	Staff to be made aware that wheelchair access is only available on the ground floors
Are toilet facilities sufficiently large to accommodate a hoist and changing bed if needed?	☐	X	The downstairs toilet is accessible and can fit a hoist however would not accommodate a changing bed
Are showers available?	X	☐	A shower room is available in No. 10 building
Are pathways around the premises safe and well signed?	X	☐	
Are parking arrangements appropriate and safe for disabled access?	X	☐	Disabled parking bay is available in Ashley Way which is a distance of approximately 75m from main entrance of Heygate and directly next to No.10 Disability transport Drop off zone is available to designated Parents and Pupils outside of Heygate building
Are emergency and evacuation systems appropriate for all?	X	☐	Yes and identified on Pupil Profiles as necessary– staff who work with these children are aware. Regular practices are held and outcomes reviewed to ensure systems are appropriate for all.
Are alarms accessible to all (ie via flashing lights as well as sirens?		X	Alarms are only audio. Consideration of flashing lights to be fitted to alarms
Are signs suitable for those with sensory impairment (ie using Braille, tactile surfaces, or audio)?	☐	X	To be reviewed site wide.
Are signs clear and simple?	X	☐	
Does décor provide appropriate contrast and harmony for those with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?	X	☐	Contrasting edging on steps/ramps to be reviewed. Lighting in classrooms is appropriate. Any problems with flickering lights or interactive whiteboards are reported and fixed immediately, suitable and varied backgrounds are used on IWB.
Are all areas well lit?	X	☐	**Yes**
Are steps taken to reduce background noise for those with a hearing impairment?	X	☐	Areas identified on action plan based on needs of new admitted children.
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	X	☐	Specialist seating has been sourced for students and on admittance of new students reviewed as necessary