Accessibility Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy reflects the values and ethos of Castlebar School in relation to Accessibility. This policy is drawn up in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act (SENDA). It draws on the guidance set out in "Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils", issued by the DfE.

Castlebar School caters for pupils with complex learning difficulties and as a 'special school' focuses its resources to ensure equality of access for all pupils regardless of the SEN to ensure they maximise their learning potential.

2. Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

"A person has a disability 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 carry out normal day to day activities."

3. Key Objective

The key objective is to reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to ensure full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils.

The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; to provide a more inclusive curriculum, including:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

4. Achieving the Objectives

This section outlines the main activities, which the school undertakes, and is planning to undertake, to achieve the key objective outlined above.

A. Education & related activities
The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, and other external professionals that can support the school to ensure equality of access and developmental achievement commensurate with their potential ability.

B. Physical environment
The school will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities, services and fittings.

C. Provision of information
The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

- **https://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk**
- **http://ealinghelp.org.uk/**

5. Accessibility Plan - Identifying Barriers to Access

5.1. Organisational:

- The school works with the LA SEN department to facilitate admissions – see admissions policy
- Prospective parents open mornings and tours of the school are regularly offered.
- The school works with the school nursing service and with other professionals to ensure all pupils medical needs are catered for
- School trips are fully inclusive and are risk assessed
- School clubs and activities are provided for all children
- The school offers fully inclusive holiday club opportunities during the Easter and Summer break

5.2. Attitudes:

- All teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support pupils with learning difficulties
- Pupils have an individual education plan (IEP) and lesson plans provide for individual learning
- There are high expectations for all pupils, who are baselined with smart targets
- A robust monitoring procedure is in place to ensure pupils achieve their potential
- All staff seek to remove barriers to learning and encourage participation
- Classroom staff are trained in a number of communication strategies and are skilled in range of techniques e.g. structured learning, motivational behaviour, Talking Partners, TEACCH
- The curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of the pupils
- School policies e.g. anti-bullying, SEN policy, Equality, health and safety are in place and are regularly reviewed

5.3. Physical access

- The school is arranged on one level providing easy access to all areas
- classrooms are organised and resourced to meet the needs of pupils
- Class sizes are kept small
- Accessibility toilets provided in all areas of the school
- Signage is provided and incorporates the use of Makaton symbols
- Emergency and evacuation procedures are in place to support ALL pupils, including pupils with physical, visual and auditory impairments
- All areas to which pupils should have access are well lit and emergency automatic lighting is in place
- Steps have been taken to reduce background noise, with acoustic boards provided where needed
- Lunchtimes are structured to ensure a calm and enjoyable dining experience
- The kitchen provides a range of meals to suit dietary including both meat and vegetarian options
- Sports and PE facilities meet the needs of the whole school and are accessible to all
- Playgrounds have been designed to provide opportunities for active play and to help develop social skills

5.4. Curriculum Access

- Lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve and are differentiated to meet pupils needs according to their IEP and lesson plans
- Lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class
- Pupils study a range of topics including art, music, cooking and P.E.
- ICT is used across the curriculum to support learning
- Opportunities are provided for learning outside of the classroom with a multitude of outside learning spaces provided including class outside areas, a wilderness garden, a science garden as well as sports facilities e.g. swimming pool, cycle track, basketball court, football pitch etc.

- Classrooms are organised and individually assessed through the environmental check list and risk assessment procedures.
- Timetabling provides structure and consistency
- Assessment and monitoring procedures report progress for all pupils
- Transition and integration opportunities prepare pupils for high school

5.5. Information Access

- Both written and verbal instructions use simple language
- Access to School Social Serivces
- Makaton and PECS symbols are used to support effective communication
- Information is presented to groups in a way, which is user friendly and suitable for the audience.
- Parents who cannot read or who have EAL receive additional support
- ICT resources include a range of devices to support access including touchscreens, clicker mouse
- The school runs a range of parent workshops including one for ICT and e-safety
- The majority of staff have a school email account
- Regular Staff and Cluster group briefings keep everyone informed
- Digital display screens provide information on the school day
- A home to school diary system is an effective information tool for school and parents to communicate
- The school produces a monthly newsletter and regularly sends letters home
- Access to information is provided by the school website
- The school subscribes to a texting service to aid communication with parents/staff

6. Accessibility Plan – Key Recommendations

Area	Key Recommendations	Timescale	Person/s responsible	Success Criteria
Physical Access	Improved toilet facilities to Blue Area Redevelop the library area to provide a more structured and defined place for learning, with appropriated shelving for book displays, adequate storage for resources and comfortable seating to meet the needs of both early years and upper school cohorts – ensuring accessibility for all.	Sept 2017	Head/SBM/AH	
Curriculum Access	Extend reading stock to include a wider range of sensory and suitable reading books to support learning	March 2017	Jade/Hayley	
Information Access	Promote and support use of my USO to support their child's learning – helping parents with limited ICT or communication difficulties to develop skills.	Sept 2017 and ongoing	Ian	
Information Access	Install interactive smart boards to infants' area to support learning through ICT.	April 2017	Ian/SBM	

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