



Accessibility Plan

Adopted By: Board of Trustees

Date: November 2024

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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Date of Issue:	November 2024
Policy applies to:	All schools in Wessex Multi-Academy Trust
Policy Version Number:	1
Purpose of the document:	To set out how, over time, our schools will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase access to the curriculum b) Improve the physical environment of the school c) Make information more accessible by providing this in a range of different ways
Summary of the main points:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Vision and aims 3. Objectives 4. School context 5. Pupil data 6. Audit 7. Consultation 8. Previous actions 9. Sources of advice and information 10. Other policies 11. Implementation and monitoring
Approved by:	Wessex MAT Board of Trustees
Reviewer:	Karen Weir/Mike Foley
Summary of amendments:	n.a
Next review due:	November 2027

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1. Introduction

1.1. All schools must have an Accessibility Plan. This is required by law - Equality Act 2010. Accessibility Plans support current and future pupils with a disability.

1.2. The Equality Act says that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

1.3. Accessibility Plans set out how, over time, a school will:

- increase access to the curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the school
- make information more accessible by providing this in a range of different ways

1.4. This is our school Accessibility Plan.

2. Vision and aims

2.1. Our aim is for everyone at Dorchester Middle School to feel part of the school community. We are committed to making our school as accessible as possible. We want our pupils with a disability to:

- be fully included in school life
- actively take part in high quality learning
- thrive and enjoy their learning
- develop the skills to go on and lead fulfilled lives as adults
- be empowered, confident and able to function as independently as possible

2.2. We want our pupils with a disability to access all elements of school life. This includes school clubs, activities, and trips. We recognise that we may have to do things a little differently to make this happen.

3. Objectives

3.1. At Dorchester Middle School all staff and governors will be aware of, and working in line with:

- this Accessibility Plan
- the wider disability provisions set out in the Equality Act
- the United Nations Conventions on the rights of:
 - the child
 - persons with disabilities

3.2. Our SEND Governor will champion the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. They will be involved in developing and reviewing this Accessibility Plan.

3.3. Our staff will remove disadvantage faced by pupils with a disability by:

- adopting a 'can do' attitude
- having a flexible approach to teaching
- modifying the curriculum and environment

3.4. Person-centred systems will be in place to support the inclusion of pupils with a disability.

4. **School context**

4.1 Dorchester Middle School is based in central Dorchester. There are 600 children on role from Years 5 to Year 8.

Our School is built upon our mantra of **ROARS** (Ready, Original, Ambitious, Respectful and Safe).

Our vision is simple. To ensure every child at Dorchester Middle School reaches their potential academically, physically, and emotionally, fully ready to move onto the next stage of their education.

We are a community of committed education professionals, relentlessly focussed on teaching and learning that is underpinned by best practice research. We are passionate about wanting our pupils to thrive.

Promoting a love of reading and ensuring the skills our pupils need to read fluently and with understanding is central to our curriculum and pedagogy.

We are dedicated in ensuring that every child, every day, receives high quality teaching, a broad and balanced curriculum and opportunities which allow them to live out our school's mantra and become responsible members of our local community.

A safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where everyone is equal, and all achievements are celebrated ensures that our pupils feel confident, motivated, and understood by all staff for the individual and additional needs they have. We firmly believe that every child has a unique character to be inspired.

We seek to bring the outside world into our school community and provide pupils with every opportunity to experience something new, to build curiosity and raise aspiration.

5. **Pupil data**

- 5.1. We ask for information about any disabilities or health conditions in early communications with new parents and carers. We also carefully observe our pupils' progress.
- 5.2. Where our pupils have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, we use the information within this to ensure that we have a good understanding of their disabilities and how to support them.

5.3. Current pupil data shows that at the start of the 2024/25 academic year, 21 percent of our pupils were regarded as disabled under the Equality Act 2010. Our pupils have the following areas of need:

- Cerebral Palsy and other physical disabilities
- Mental health needs.
- Speech and language difficulties
- Autism Spectrum Condition and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

6. Audit

6.1. To help us develop our Accessibility Plan, we undertook an environmental audit of Dorchester Middle School. This told us that:

- There is increasing access to the curriculum with training offered to all teaching staff to ensure the curriculum is adapted to meet need
- The school is old in structure so this has limitations on what can be offered to meet need, e.g. narrow corridors, layout of classrooms can impact on students with sensory needs
- The PD Base is old in structure, and this needs investment as outlined in the school 5-year maintenance plan.
- Chromebooks and reading pens are used to support accessibility to the curriculum
- Students have access to on-site physiotherapy and OT through school's Base.
- Lifts allow students to access all parts of the school.
- The outside area is flat in the main, enabling students to access outside areas.

7. Consultation

7.1. In developing our Accessibility Plan, we have consulted with:

- our pupils
- parents and carers
- our SENCO and SEND support staff
- other staff at the school, including the leadership team
- our SEND Governor
- relevant specialist services

7.2. These consultations told us that:

- Our students with disabilities felt included in all aspects of school life, including external opportunities such as clubs, trips and residential
- Our school has strong partnerships with outside professionals who we work with collaboratively.
- Our students have access to the broad curriculum in line with their peers.

- We have a strong partnership with parents, including SEND coffee mornings and Parent Voice.
- We have developed an Enhanced Transition program when joining and leaving school, working in partnership with schools, parents, professionals, and students.

8. Previous actions

8.1. Access to the curriculum

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we improved access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability through the following means:

- CPD for all staff on SEND with a particular focus on adaptations
- Developing learning environments that are sensory aware and focused.
- SEND briefings held monthly
- Increase use of technology
- Primary model implemented in Year 5 and 6 to allow for consistency of timetable for core subjects
- Improvements to provisions in the PD Base

8.2. The physical environment

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we improved the physical environment of the school to increase access for pupils with a disability by:

- Improving toilet facilities
- Improving the gym and hall so reduced smells impacted on sensory triggers
- Improved outside area with reduction in trees and hedges
- New water fountains
- New Fire alarm system in the PD Base
- New automatic door opening into the PD Base
- Improved layout to the PD Base to allow more privacy

8.3. Access to information

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we made information more accessible to pupils with a disability by:

- Increased use of technology across the curriculum
- Pupil Voice survey
- New Student Council, including the new role of Head Pupil for Inclusion
- Welcome evenings for Parents and Carers

9. Sources of advice and information

9.1. Our Accessibility Plan has been written following guidance from the Local Authority and considering the Dorset Local Authority Accessibility Strategy. Additionally, the following

sources of advice and information have been used:

- Dorset Council OT and Physiotherapy team.
- Autism in Schools project membership
- Educational Psychologist.
- NAS guidance on Accessible Teaching
- DCC SEND provision team
- Speech and Language therapists – NHS and private

10. Other policies

10.1. Our Accessibility Plan complements and supports our:

- Special educational needs and disability policy and SEN information report
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions policy
- Equality information and equality objectives

It can also be read alongside the following school documents:

- Child protection policy
- Curriculum policy
- Staff development policy
- Health and safety policy (including off-site safety)
- Behaviour policy
- School development plan

11. Implementation and monitoring

11.1. Our Accessibility Plan shows how we will continue to improve accessibility a Dorchester Middle School for pupils with a disability (and for staff and visitors to the school) over the next 3 years. It may be used to inform other school planning documents.

11.2. We will work in partnership with the Local Authority/ Wessex MAT in implementing the Accessibility Plan. Where necessary, environmental works will be guided by relevant buildings regulations.

11.3. Sufficient resources will be allocated to implement this Accessibility Plan.

11.4. The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed regularly (and updated if needed). It will be monitored through the Head Pupil for Inclusion within school for advisement on Pupil Voice and the SENDCO and PD Base Manager to review outcomes termly.

11.5. This Accessibility Plan runs for 3 years and will be updated in November 2027. Once updated, we will advise our parents/ carers of this via our usual communications and on our website.

11.6. The Dorchester Middle School complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

12. Accessibility Action Plan

12.1. Increasing access to the curriculum

Outcome 1		
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Ensure that all teaching staff adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners and students with disabilities have access to all learning resources needed to support their independence	
What actions will we take to achieve this?	<p>School SIP will ensure that SEND is at the centre of school improvement</p> <p>SEND Action Plan</p> <p>Training for teachers on adapting the curriculum and knowledge of disabilities and conditions.</p> <p>white boards / chunked text/ use of video and pictures / test modification</p> <p>font / colour of presentations / technical support or specific programme.</p> <p>Use of technology as appropriate to need</p>	
How can we tell if this is successful?	<p>Improved outcomes for students with disabilities at formal assessment point in Year 6 SATS.</p> <p>EHCP targets achieved by all pupils</p> <p>Increasing access to the curriculum at Band 1 and 2</p> <p>Students moving onto Upper School with recognised improvement on data points on entry.</p> <p>Pupil Voice.</p>	
When will this work be done?	Ongoing	
Approximate cost	NA	
Responsible person(s)	Head Teacher and SENDCO	Date complete

Outcome 2		
What outcome do we want to achieve?	To increase the reading abilities of all students with SEND.	
What actions will we take to achieve this?	All students entering DMS will undertake a reading age test (NGRT). Children with a SAS of 83 or below will access Freshstart RWI phonic intervention. Students with a SAS of > 90 will access Lexia reading intervention. Students with > SAS will access reading partner volunteers as appropriate. Phonetic teaching of spelling and reading will reach across all subject areas.	
How can we tell if this is successful?	Data across all subjects shows increased attainment of at least 30% of students accessing reading support. Reading assessment shows year on year increased attainment by at least 15%	
When will this work be done?	Led through the Reading strategy and graduated response.	
Approximate cost	NA	
Responsible person(s)	Reading Lead and SENDCO	Date complete

12.2. Improving the physical environment

Outcome 1		
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Improve physical access around the school and Classrooms are laid out and presented by teachers to meet the sensory and physical needs of all students.	
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Look at and plan for increased access to the field for those with physical disabilities. Reduced clutter in classrooms. Notice boards are purposeful and clear. Seating plans are used to consider needs of all students with disabilities.	
How can we tell if this is successful?	Pupil Voice reflects increased satisfaction with classrooms. More students accessing the playing field.	
When will this work be done?	In line with school 5 -year maintenance plan and school SIP.	
Approximate cost	NA	
Responsible person(s)	Head Teacher	Date complete

12.3. Making information more accessible

Outcome 1			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Increased use of technology for students, staff and parents and carers with dyslexia and lower reader ages.		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	<p>Increased use of talk to type technology and use of accessibility suite through Microsoft Package, including use of AI' use of reading pens becomes more widespread through school.</p> <p>Communication with parents and carers uses the advances of the Microsoft Suite to enable easier access to all school comms including the use of immersive reader.</p> <p>Staff to use immersive reader with students to access text in class. Use Accessibility Checker across the school to ensure documents are accessible for people with disabilities.</p>		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Evidenced through the curriculum Enacted in exercise books		
When will this work be done?	Ongoing over the next 3 year		
Approximate cost	NA		
Responsible person(s)	SENDCO	Date complete	