Empower Trust Accessibility Plan

2024-2027

Frequency of Review:	Annually
Date of Approval:	November 2024
Date of Next Review:	September 2027
Adopted by the Executive Group of Empower Trust	

Date of Review:	**September 2026**	Removed gender identity section (moved to Equality and Diversity Statement). Added data protection section. Enhanced stakeholder engagement section. Added annual review action to action plan. Clarified relationship with other policies.
Date of Review:		
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1. Introduction and 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 disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum

• Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided

• Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

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.

At Empower Trust we are committed to establishing equality for all pupils, their parents, staff and other users of the school. This is reflected in our school aims.

At St Mary's CE Primary and Nursery School:

At St Mary's CE Primary School & Nursery, our Christian vision underpins our commitment to inclusion and accessibility. We recognise every child as a unique and valued individual and are committed to removing barriers so that all pupils can participate fully in the life, learning and opportunities of our school. Through high expectations, adaptive teaching and appropriate reasonable adjustments, we seek to enable every child to flourish.

At our school we especially value:

• Collaboration: 'We work together to support and nurture everyone to achieve their aims'

• Aspirations: 'We encourage each other to aim high and achieve their aspirations'

• Respect: 'We are honest, thoughtful and considerate to ourselves, others and the world around us'

• Positivity: 'We adopt a 'can do' and optimistic attitude'

Availability and Communication

The 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.

The Empower Trust's procedures can be found here: https://www.empowertrust.co.uk/equality-diversity.

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.

Stakeholder Engagement

We have included a range of stakeholders in the development of this accessibility plan, including pupils, parents, staff and governors of the school.

During each annual review, we will:

• Consult with disabled pupils and their parents about their experiences and any barriers they face

• Seek feedback from staff on the effectiveness of current accessibility measures

• Report progress to governors and trustees

• Document all feedback received and actions taken as a result

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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 disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Data Protection

Information about disabled pupils is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. We ensure that:

- Personal data about disabilities is kept confidential and secure
- Information is only shared with staff who need it to support the pupil
- Parents and pupils (where appropriate) are informed about how their data is used
- Data is retained in line with our data retention schedule

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3. Scope of the Plan

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three key areas identified in the Equality Act 2010:

3.1 Increasing Curriculum Access

Pupils with SEND and/or disabilities will be supported to access high-quality teaching within their classroom alongside their peers wherever appropriate. Reasonable adjustments, adaptive teaching, scaffolding and additional adult support will be used to remove barriers to learning while maintaining ambitious expectations for all pupils.

3.2 Improving the Physical Environment

Improving the physical environment of the school such as ramps and handrails as well as physical aids to access education such as specialist desks and ICT equipment.

3.3 Improving Information Delivery

Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is already provided to pupils who are not disabled. This should be done within a reasonable period of time and in formats that take account of any views expressed by pupils or parents about their preferred means of communication such as Braille, audio tape, large print and the provision of information orally.

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4. Current Provision

4.1 Curriculum Access

The school SEND policy and information report ensures that staff identify, assess and arrange suitable provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. Working with the LA and Educational Psychology Service, the SENCo manages the Education Health Care Plan process, ensuring additional resources are available where appropriate.

Our schools work closely with specialist services including:

- Hearing Impaired Children's Service
- Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapy Team
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Learning Support Advisory Team
- Behavioural Support Services
- Educational Psychology Service
- Early Help Team
- Child and Family Worker

4.2 Physical Environment

Our schools have made the following adaptations to the physical environment:

- Wheelchair accessible toilets
- Ramps for access to all areas
- Accessible surfaces for wheelchair users
- Appropriate signage

4.3 Information Delivery

Staff are aware of the services available through the LA for converting written information into alternative formats. We provide information in alternative formats when requested, including:

- Large print
- Coloured paper/overlays
- Visual aids and symbols
- Translation services
- Audio formats where appropriate

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5. Related Policies

This Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

• Equality and Diversity Statement Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

• Inclusion Policy

• Medicines and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

• Data Protection Policy

> ***Note:*** *The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination based on nine protected characteristics, including disability. Other protected characteristics (including gender reassignment and sexual orientation) are addressed in our Equality and Diversity Statement, not in this Accessibility Plan which focuses specifically on disability access.*

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6. Implementation and Review

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

This Access Improvement Plan is reviewed annually, with a full review every three years.

The action plan (Appendix 1) shows how the school will address priorities identified in the plan, including:

• Specific actions to be taken

• Lead personnel responsible

• Resources required

• Timescales

• Success criteria

Progress against the action plan will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and reported to governors annually.

Appendix 1: Access Improvement Plan

Priority	Lead People	Strategy / Action	Resources	Time	Success Criteria
Availability of written material in alternative formats		Staff aware of services available through LA if required. Disabled people aware of facilities through signs and newsletters etc. Display appropriate leaflets for parents to collect.	Contact details and translation/ adaptation services	In place and ongoing	Information available to disabled pupils/parents as appropriate. Written information available in alternative formats. Take-up of information leaflets by parents.
Training for teachers on adapting the curriculum and effective communicati on with parents		Staff training and meetings with parents of SEND pupils arranged. One Page Profiles shared with parents to ensure they understand the next steps in their child's learning.	Training time LSA time allocated	In place and ongoing	Increased access to the curriculum. Needs of all learners met. Parents fully informed.
Ensure adaptive teaching enables pupils with SEND and disabilities to access core learning alongside their peers.		Staff training on signing. Staff training for teachers on adapting the curriculum and reasonable adjustments. Staff training on supporting children with visual/hearing difficulties. Work with specialist teachers to ensure children receive the correct support. Staff training for supporting children with ASD and other disabilities as required. Modifications to learning materials for children who need larger print or coloured paper etc.	Training time LSA time allocated where needed	In place and ongoing	Increased access to the curriculum. Needs of all learners met.

Priority	Lead People	Strategy / Action	Resources	Time	Success Criteria
Training for staff to assist children with specific medical needs		Ensure staff are supported by the appropriate medical professions e.g. asthma nurse; diabetes nurse. Relevant staff trained and signed off by medical professionals e.g. diabetes. Trust medicines policy is kept up to date to reflect need in school. Close links with school nurse service to enable care plans to be drawn up in a timely manner.	Purchase of emergency inhalers. Ensure child with diabetes has the correct equipment with them every day.	In place and ongoing	Staff working with a child are appropriately trained to support child with disability/medical needs.

Priority	Lead People	Strategy / Action	Resources	Time	Success Criteria
Appropriate use of specialised equipment to benefit individual pupils and staff		Large, colour-coded, lowercase keyboards for pupils with specific difficulty. Access to touch typing programmes such as 'Dance Mat' (BBC). Laptops and iPads available in classrooms. Sloping boards/sit and move cushions available for identified pupils. Coloured overlays for pupils with visual stress. Specially shaped pencils for pupils with grip difficulty. Specific OT programme for identified pupils e.g. Cool Kids. Purchase of specialist equipment to help with OT where needed e.g. scooter board; balance balls etc. Adjustable height tables brought to ensure children can sit comfortably. Assistance with intimate care for identified pupils.	Specialist equipment as listed	In place and ongoing	Increased access to the curriculum. Needs of all learners met.
Provision of wheelchair accessible toilet and lifts		Maintain wheelchair accessible toilets and lifts. Regular checks and maintenance schedule in place.	Build into maintenance budget	In place and ongoing	Physical accessibility of school increased. Wheelchair accessible toilet available and well-maintained.

Priority	Lead People	Strategy / Action	Resources	Time	Success Criteria
Ensure that all pupils can use the school minibus		Hire of a wheelchair accessible minibus for trips	Hire of minibus	In place and ongoing	Minibus is wheelchair accessible. All pupils can participate in off-site activities.
All visits are risk assessed and reasonable adjustments put in place		Risk assessments for individual children with specific needs are put in place. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure children can take part in all aspects of visit with peers. Consideration to staffing and use of centres with ability to cater for specific needs. First aid training for staff and first aid abilities of centres checked.	Risk assessments Additional staffing where required	In place and ongoing	All children in school are able to access any visits or residential activities regardless of need.
Improve and maintain access to the physical environment		The environment is adapted to the needs of children as required. Ramps for all school access are assessed regularly for wear and damage. Surfaces in school have been considered to allow for wheelchair access. The effects of weather conditions on them are evaluated before use: for example, the daily mile track; wildlife area including the tarmac path around it. Play equipment is installed at an accessible height for the children as required: chalk boards at different heights, games/maps at an accessible height.	Cost of maintaining ramps, surfaces when required	In place and ongoing	Accessibility of school areas increased. Physically impaired children/staff are able to access all areas of the school safely.

Priority	Lead People	Strategy / Action	Resources	Time	Success Criteria
Annual review and monitoring of accessibility		Conduct annual stakeholder consultation with disabled pupils, parents and staff. Review effectiveness of current measures. Identify any new barriers to accessibility. Update action plan as needed. Report to governors on progress.	Staff time for consultation and review	Annually (November)	Stakeholder feedback documented. Action plan updated to reflect current needs. Governors informed of progress and any concerns.